



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



THE HOME LIBRARY
—
WOMEN
OF CHRISTENDOM

THE LITERATURE OF WOMANHOOD

THE HOME LIBRARY.

SKETCHES

OF

THE WOMEN OF CHRISTENDOM.

DEDICATED TO THE
WOMEN OF INDIA.

BY THE
AUTHOR OF "CHRONICLES OF THE SCHÖNBERG-
COTTA FAMILY."

PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE TRACT COMMITTEE



LONDON:
SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE;
NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE, CHARING CROSS;
43, QUEEN VICTORIA STREET; AND 48, PICCADILLY.
NEW YORK: POTT, YOUNG AND CO.
1880.

210. 0. 878.

PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED, LONDON AND BECCLES.

PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH EDITION.

THESE sketches were originally undertaken at the request of a member of the Cambridge University Mission at Delhi, with the hope of giving our fellow-subjects, the women of India, some conception of what Christianity has done for the women of Christendom.

With this intention the most typical and best-known biographies have been chosen, such as I should not have thought of presenting anew to readers in my own country.

It has, however, been thought that this fresh grouping together of revered and characteristic lives may have its value even in England.

To me the dwelling in thought amidst this blessed company of the holy and humble in heart has been a delight, because of the inspiration of their examples, and also for the deepened sense, whilst writing for those entirely outside Christendom, of the indestructible Unity of the Christian

Church, from her most tropical to her most temperate zones, the oneness of the Christian moral ideal, the identity of the Christian life.

May these pages help in their measure to deepen in us all the faith and hope of the prayer they have often brought into my own heart!

COLLECT FOR ALL SAINTS' DAY.

O Almighty God, Who hast knit together Thine elect in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of Thy Son Christ our Lord; Grant us grace so to follow Thy blessed Saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those unspeakable joys, which Thou hast prepared for them that unfeignedly love Thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

MINISTRY.

“ The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.”

SINCE service is the highest lot,
And all are in one Body bound,
In all the world the place is not
Which may not with this bliss be crowned.

The sufferer on the bed of pain
Need not be laid aside from this,
But for each kindness gives again
“ The joy of doing kindnesses.”

The poorest may enrich this feast;
Not one lives only to receive,
But renders through the hands of Christ
Richer returns than man can give.

The little child in trustful glee,
With love and gladness brimming o'er,
Many a cup of ministry
May for the weary veteran pour.

The lonely glory of a throne
May yet this lowly joy preserve;
Love may make that a stepping-stone,
And raise “ I reign ” into “ I serve.”

This, by the ministries of prayer,
The loneliest life with blessings crowds,
Can consecrate each petty care,
Make angels' ladders out of clouds.

Nor serve we only when we gird
Our hearts for special ministry;
That creature best has ministered
Which is what it was meant to be.

Birds by being glad their Maker bless,
By simply shining sun and star;
And we, whose law is love, serve less
By what we do than what we are.

Since service is the highest lot,
And angels know no higher bliss,
Then with what good her cup is fraught
Who was created but for this!

CONTENTS.

						PAGE
	INTRODUCTION	...	...	...	...	1
PART						
	I. THE FIRST WOMAN:					
	EVE	...	...	...	...	4
	II. THE WOMEN OF THE GOSPELS					14
	MARY THE MOTHER OF OUR LORD	...	...	...	...	14
	The Song of Mary	...	...	...	...	19
	The Cradle in the Manger	...	...	...	...	23
	The Welcomme in the Ancient Temple	...	...	...	...	30
	The Child lost and found	...	...	...	...	34
	The Wedding-Feast	...	...	...	...	37
	The Mother's Fears	...	...	...	...	41
	The Mother by the Cross	...	...	...	...	43
	The Mother among the Disciples at Pente- cost	...	...	...	...	46
	MARY MAGDALENE	...	...	...	...	49
	THE STORIES OF THE TWO ALABASTER BOXES					55
	The Story of the Ointment poured on the Feet with Tears	...	...	...	...	56
	The Story of the Ointment poured on the Head	...	...	...	...	61
	III. THE WOMEN OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES	...	...	...	...	76
	LOIS AND EUNICE	...	...	...	...	86
	LYDIA	...	...	...	...	99
	AQUILA AND PRISCILLA	...	...	...	...	108

PART		PAGE
IV.	THE WOMEN OF THE EARLY CHURCH	114
	THE STORY OF BLANDINA	120
	PERPETUA AND FELICITAS	130
	MONICA, MOTHER OF ST. AUGUSTINE	138
V.	THE CHRISTIAN WOMEN OF ROME IN THE FOURTH CENTURY	149
VI.	THE CHRISTIAN WOMEN OF THE MIDDLE AGES	159
	THE ABBESS HILDA	164
	JOAN OF ARC, THE MAID OF ORLEANS ...	174
VII.	CHRISTIAN WOMEN OF MODERN TIMES 184	
	PRASCOVIA LOPOULOFF	188
	LADY RACHEL RUSSELL	207
	MADAME ELIZABETH OF FRANCE	220
	THE MOTHER OF THE WESLEYS	248
	CATHERINE TAIT, WIFE OF THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY	258
VIII.	THE WOMEN OF THE ARMY OF SUCCOUR 280	
	MADEMOISELLE LEGRAS	283
	HANNAH MORE	287
	SARAH MARTIN	293
	MRS. FRY	303
	CONCLUSION	328
	APPENDIX :	
	POEMS ON THE WOMEN OF THE GOSPELS ...	335

SKETCHES
OF
THE WOMEN OF CHRISTENDOM.

INTRODUCTION.

I HAVE been asked to bring before you, our Indian sisters, what Christianity has done and can do for women, by telling you stories of the beautiful lives of Christian women from the days when Christ our Lord was born of a woman, to our own.

I shall delight to try to do this. You will excuse me if, from insufficient acquaintance with your thoughts and lives, I should sometimes tell you things you know already, and sometimes speak of things too unfamiliar for you at once to comprehend.

As I wonder how best to introduce the subject to you, a beautiful and blessed company seems to rise before me. But the most blessed and beautiful among them are veiled. It is a veil of light, but still a veil. They shine on us for a time, in some

deed of sacrifice and service, and then they are lost to sight again, hidden in the homes they bless.

They do not wish to be seen, although, if necessary, they do not fear to be seen. The deepest influence of women flows silently, like a quiet stream hidden among the leaves and blossoms it keeps green.

You must not think I pretend to bring before you, in these Christian stories, virtues unknown or unpractised among yourselves. Wife, mother, daughter, sister—we, like you, have no more sacred names than these.

Christianity has exalted the ideal of womanhood, not by changing it, but by showing that the true life of woman, which is love, is the very essential Being of God; for it is written that “God is love.”

Our Lord Jesus Christ has exalted the mission of woman, which is sacrifice and service, not by changing it, but by making it His own, in that He came “not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

There is a touching story in one of your books of a young mother, Kisagotani, who lost her little son. She carried the dead child clasped to her bosom, and went about asking if any one would give some medicine for it. When the neighbours saw this they said, “Is she mad, that she carries about, on her breast, the dead body of her son?”

But a wise man, thinking to himself, “Alas! she does not understand the law of death; I must comfort her,” said to her kindly, “There is one (Tara

Taken, *i.e.* Buddha, the Lord and Master, Gotama) who can give you medicine. You must go to him."

The young mother went to him. He said—

"I want a handful of mustard seed, taken from a home where no one—son, husband, parent, nor slave—has died."

She went and asked, everywhere.

The people replied—

"Lady, what is this that you say? The living are few, but the dead are many."

At last, not being able to find a single home where no one had died, she began to think, "This is a heavy task that I am engaged in. I am not the only one whose son is dead. Everywhere children, parents, are dying."

I would do something like this, my sisters, and yet gloriously unlike, for you. I would take you by the hand and lead you into one and another of our Christian homes, and show you how not *death*, but *life*, has entered there, the life of divine love and faith and hope, life in Him who is our Life, and made conquests of discord and despair and selfishness, which is the death of the whole being.

PART I. THE FIRST WOMAN.

EVE.

BOTH parts of our Sacred Scriptures begin with the story of a woman.

The first is the sad story of a fall ; how this world of ours went wrong. And the heart that drank in the poison which poisoned our whole race, was the heart of a woman.

The second is the glorious story of the rising again ; of redemption and restoration. And here, too, the lowly and loving heart which received the creative word which renews the world was the heart of a woman.

Eve and Mary begin the two histories which make up our Scriptures, the history of the fall, and the history of the redemption and rising again of men.

Throughout the history it is the same.

The worst, and the best, in the long story of our world, in all times and places, are continually

springing from the influence of bad or good women.

So closely has God bound us together that it is impossible for man to lower woman without lowering himself; as it is impossible for women to be made nobler and wiser without ennobling and raising the men of their race.

Our first story begins in a garden.

Perhaps you will say, Is the story fact, or poem ? parable, or history ?

It is both : true, with the deepest truth, always renewed in various forms. To get at the truth in all histories we must read them also as parables and poems ; that is, as a sacred story which does not merely gossip about the external facts, but penetrates to the divine and human meanings enfolded in these.

The garden or paradise was such as you can picture better than I can, for it was flooded with your glowing Southern sunshine, and filled with the fruitful trees and fragrant flowers of your Eastern lands.

The almighty and all-loving God Himself had planted it, and no one had spoiled it.

Every tree that is pleasant to the eye and good for food was in it, every delicious fruit you can think of ; and the shady woodlands and sunny lawns were watered by cool brooks flowing musically to the four rivers which bounded the garden.

And in all this beautiful region at first lived only one solitary man, Adam, whom God had made king and lord of it all.

He was not made to be idle. God loved him too much, and knew him too well, for that. The garden was given him to dress and to keep.

From the beginning God Himself has always been working. Every day He is creating, upholding, restoring. And He made man to be like Himself, happy in beneficent work.

But man needs something besides work to make him blessed. He needs companionship, a home, love.

And in all the beautiful paradise Adam, the first man, found no companion. Among all the swift, and strong, and beautiful creatures that coursed through the meadows, or roamed in the forests, or sang their sweet songs on the trees, for Adam was no helpmeet found.

None else of the creatures were alone; all had their associates and mates. But Adam had no one.

He could call every creature by its name, which described what it was; but none of them could answer him in speech like his own.

It seems as if Adam were left by himself just long enough to show how he needed the gift which God meant to give him.

Then in a deep sleep the mighty hand of the Creator was laid on him, and from his very flesh and bones, from his own side, a portion of his own life was taken and made woman.

And God Himself brought her to him.

And then the first man, forefather of us all, spoke the first human words which are recorded.

He said, "This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh."

For here at last was another creature who could understand and respond to his speech.

And Adam had found the helpmeet he needed, and was no more alone. The husband and the wife, the sacred two, no more two, as Adam said, but one, made a full world for each other, a sacred source of life for the ages.

But then the simple, happy story is broken by a glimpse into an earlier world.

In the garden, before Eve was made, there was a tree called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

God had told Adam not to eat of this tree; for if he ate of it he would die.

God knew, and told Adam.

And Adam told Eve.

But in that earlier world, which lay hidden around them, which they could not see, were beings who hated Adam and Eve, and wished to spoil their peace.

One of them especially set himself to this. He had been good and very glorious himself once.

God made all creatures good. But this once good and glorious creature had fallen into self-love and untruth, and now he wanted to make Adam and Eve fall from light and peace into darkness and strife, as he had.

He knew he could not do either of them the least harm except by making them do wrong. He

knew he could not make them do wrong as long as they trusted God. He appeared to Eve as a serpent.

He knew all about the tree whose fruit they were not to eat.

He knew quite well that what God had said about it was true.

He knew that God loved the man and the woman He had made as a father loves his own children. He knew he could only bring unhappiness into this beautiful new world, by separating the hearts of these beautiful new children of God from their Father.

And he knew he could only so separate them by making them believe a lie about God.

Do you ask me why this Evil One hated the man and woman ?

I cannot answer you, except by asking you to look into your own hearts.

He had been happy and beautiful and good himself once. He had fallen, and when he saw these new creatures happy and beautiful and good as he had been, he wanted to make them like himself.

If you have lost, especially through your own fault, any good or beauty you once had, do you never know what it is to be unhappy to see others still enjoy it ?

Did you never see those who have done wrong themselves become tempters of others ?

We call this Evil One the hater, Satan, the Enemy, the Tempter.

And it was Eve, the woman, he set himself to tempt.

He began his temptation very subtly, with a question: "Yea, has God said you may not eat of *every tree of the garden?*"

He knew how apt we are, at the fullest table of blessings, just to think the one thing refused us is *the thing which we want most.*

And Eve said, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; but of the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye may not eat of it, nor may ye touch it, lest ye die."

It seems as if Eve looked round from the abundance she might enjoy, to the tree she might not taste, and at once that one forbidden tree became, "in the midst of the garden," the central point of it all to her.

And then the enemy ventured with a bolder lie, though, like all his previous lies, made credible by being hidden in a truth.

"Ye shall not surely die," he said. "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

The poisoned sting found its way into her heart.

She looked at the forbidden tree; it was beautiful, and seemed good.

We are not tempted, man, woman, or child, except with things which seem, and probably are, beautiful and good in themselves, only not just *then, or not for us.*

No one does a wicked thing because it is wicked, but because it seems the way to something good.

The tree was pleasant to the eyes and good for food; did not falsely *seem* so, but really *was* so, *at the right time*.

And then the subtle enemy had said it would make her wise!

To be wise in a moment, without trouble of training or learning, seems so pleasant!

Beautiful, happy Eve! see her with her hand stretched out to gather the fruit.

The enemy could not *give* it her. He cannot give us anything, whatever he may try to persuade us.

God only can give us good. And He will always give us the very best, at the best time, if we wait on Him and for Him.

We may snatch real blessings at the wrong time, and so make them curses.

But God only can really give good.

Did Eve fall when she took the fruit into her hand? Was such a very little thing as gathering a forbidden fruit the beginning of so much misery? No; Eve did not fall when she touched the forbidden fruit. She fell first, in *her heart*, when she believed evil of the good God, who had given them everything and each other; believed that He could withhold anything from them, not for their good and real gain, but for their harm and real loss.

The gathering of a fruit is a very little thing.

But distrusting God is the great evil ; the fall from heaven to hell, from light to darkness.

And, moreover, the thing Satan really tempted Eve with was not a fruit, but nothing less than deification. “ *Ye shall be as gods*,” he said.

The fruit was only to be a magical charm to lift them up to the throne of the universe ; to know all, like God, and therefore to be able to rule and possess all.

All the terrible steps followed quite naturally from this first step.

Poor, tempted, fallen Eve’s next step was to become herself a tempter, like the serpent.

She gave the fruit to her husband, and he did eat.

And then they found out that part, at least, of what the enemy said was only too true.

They did “ know good and evil,” as he had said, by having done evil, and so far become evil.

The blessed innocence and freedom were all gone.

And Adam’s next step was another, deeper descent into the likeness of the serpent, the accuser of the brethren.

When God called to him, as of old, in the garden, and asked what he had done, Adam, to throw the blame off from himself, accused poor fallen Eve, unhappy enough by this time. He even accused God.

“ The woman *Thou gavest* to be with me,” he said, “ tempted me, and I did eat.”

The dreadful lie of the enemy about the good

God had indeed taken root, and has been bearing fruit, upward and downward, ever since.

For the histories of our Sacred Scriptures have this remarkable characteristic.

They are not stories of something that *was once*, and *is done with*.

They are unveilings in one picture and parable of *what is happening always*, again and again.

Did God give the man and woman up—let them alone, to reap the fruits of their sin?

No! He was the Father, and loved and pitied them; He pitied that man and woman, and all men and women ever since.

Their sin made Him grieved at His heart, but it did not make Him cease to be their Father.

He began at once His unsparing, unfailing discipline of love. He met them at once with merciful punishments and merciful promises.

He drove them from the garden, where the leisure and plenty would no longer have been blessings to them, into the wilderness, to toil and to suffer. Adam to earn his bread in the sweat of his brow; Eve to become the mother of children, and suffer most through her deepest joys.

And, ever since, our race has been in the wilderness, and not in the garden; the fathers toiling, the mothers suffering.

But God never cursed the man and the woman. He cursed the tempter who had betrayed them. He cursed the ground, making it barren with thorns and thistles, for their sakes.

But His disobedient children He *punished*, which is a very different thing from cursing.

He punished them with hard labour, and anguish and pain, to make them good, to drive them back to Himself.

And he gave them, wrapt up in the very curse on the serpent, the promise whose fulfilment is the subject of my next story.

God said to the serpent—

“ I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed ; *it shall bruise thy head*, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”

The enemy was not the conqueror, however for the time he might terribly seem to be so.

God was and is the conqueror ; for He is mightier than the devil ; and He is love.

And God announced that the victory should be through the seed of the woman—the poor, tempted, fallen woman—of whose seed the victorious and holy Saviour should one day be born.

Adam might accuse Eve as he would (no doubt he was sorry for it afterwards, and they repented and wept together), but it was only through Eve, his wife, mother of his children, mother of all living, that he and the world could be delivered.

And now, ever since, the best places for any of our race are not the paradises, but the wildernesses ; not the easy, luxurious gardens where we can rest, but the hard earth which we must subdue, and where we may serve each other in the sweat of the brow, with fruitful toil and anguish.

PART II.

THE WOMEN OF THE GOSPELS.

MARY.

As our first Sacred Scriptures, called the Old Testament, begin with the mournful story of a woman who distrusted the good God, and disobeyed and fell, and dragged down with her the whole of our race,—the second part, called the New Testament, begins with the history of a woman who trusted God, and gave herself up to His holy will in loving obedience, and rose into His light, and with her lifted up all our race.

Against the sad story of Eve is set the joyful story of Mary, the blessed Virgin, the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world.

To understand one, you must know the other.

The two stories fit into each other like two broken halves of a vase—or like a riddle and the answer.

Both are stories of the beginning of a new world, and a new race, and a new life.

And both are for the whole world ; for every man, woman, and child in it.

The holy maiden Mary lived not in a paradise like Eve. The world had very long ceased to be a paradise, yet the valley in which Mary lived had been made very fair and pleasant by the sweat of the brow of man.

At the bottom of the valley was a little plain, covered with cornfields.

The sides were steep, and in some places rocky. But the rocks had been scooped and levelled into terraces. And on these terraces were gardens of silvery-leaved olives, and vineyards, and gardens of herbs.

Above these the country rose in gentle slopes ; in spring covered with grass and wild-flowers, scarlet and purple anemones, and white cyclamens, and aromatic thyme, which the bees love. Trees were scattered here and there; and at noon the shepherds gathered their flocks under the shade, and sometimes the village schoolmaster gathered the children under the spreading branches, and taught them in the fresh air on the breezy slopes.

From the top of these hills you can see a long way on both sides, to the blue Mediterranean Sea, with its border of yellow sand, and to the distant hills of the desert.

But the village where Mary lived lay below in the quiet valley. It was called Nazareth.

And you might hear the flail of the husbandman, and the song of the reaper, and the hammer of the carpenter resounding from the rocky steeps.

The inhabitants of the village were not generally spoken well of. Quite the contrary. Many wondered how any good thing could come out of Nazareth. It was a border village, and probably, as in many frontier places, many outlawed people, who had reason to flee from both the countries it bordered on, took refuge in it.

Very often we find in our Christian stories that God's very best come out of the lowest and worst places; for they are stories of conquest and redemption, of evil overcome with good.

So out of rough, wild Nazareth came this precious pearl of God.

We know nothing, certainly, of Mary's parents except that they must have been poor, and yet came of a royal lineage, of which more than a thousand years before it had been promised should be born a great King and Deliverer.

Suddenly, on the life of this simple village maiden, as on Eve of old, broke in that earlier world of unseen beings which surrounds and underlies what we see.

For thousands of years since the punishment and the promise came to the first man and woman, the sons and daughters of the world had been straying, toiling, suffering, sometimes forgetting God; sometimes longing for Him and making cries to Him as from afar off; broken off from their Father, in strife with their brethren.

And for thousands of years God had been pouring out His riches of earth and sky on them, and

from time to time calling to them through various voices of men, more or less clear, to return to Him, and to be good to each other ; especially through one nation, the Jews, whom He set apart to be, if they would, a blessing to all other nations.

And now He was about to send them His own holy, eternal Son, to come to us not as a mighty conqueror or a commanding prophet, but as a little child, a gentle teacher, a patient sufferer ; to save the world, indeed, by dying for it, to conquer by suffering, to reign by loving ; but at first to be a little child.

And, now, to her who was chosen to be His mother, Mary, the maiden of Nazareth, came the angel with the promise of His birth.

But to Mary came not a proud, envious, fallen spirit, but a lowly, loving, holy angel of God.

One day she looked up, whether from her work, or her prayers, we do not know. She was betrothed, but not married, and still in her parents' house, when the messenger of God came to her.

Our story begins—

“The angel Gabriel” (mighty one of God) “was sent from God unto a town of Galilee, called Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man named Joseph, of the house of David ; and the virgin’s name was Mary.”

The angel came in where she was and said—

“Hail, thou full of grace, much graced ; the Lord is with thee : blessed art thou among women.”

The message and the glorious vision broke on

her suddenly. But, though the vision was new to her, it was no new thing that God was with her.

All her young life, we believe, He had been with that still and strong and gentle one, preparing her for the great joy she was to bring the world.

We do not read that she said anything in answer. Mary was not given to hasty speaking. Again and again we hear that she turned things over, and weighed them silently in her mind before she spoke.

Now she was greatly agitated.

She was a Jewish maiden; came of a sacred, chosen race, to whom visions of angels and voices of God had often come in olden time.

But for many hundred years, as far as we know, these visions and voices had ceased, and life had gone on as with all of us.

Mary was greatly troubled, and her thoughts questioned and answered each other in the depths of her heart.

What could this vision and this heavenly salvation mean?

Then the heavenly voice spoke again.

The greeting was followed by the message.

Through her quiet demeanour, the mighty angel saw the agitation within, and he said—

“ Fear not, Mary! ”

He reassured her by telling her not to fear, and also by calling her by her own familiar name, by which she was known in her home.

There was much in thus being called by name

by the heavenly messenger. It meant that she was known in heaven, as in her own home.

And then he told her that the promise her nation had been treasuring up and waiting for so many hundreds of years was to be fulfilled ; that the power of the Highest should overshadow her, and, virgin as she was, she should become the mother of the Holy Child who was to save her people, and the whole world, from their sins.

At once Mary gave the answer, which has reversed for us all the distrusting words of Eve. She did not for a moment distrust the good God. She did not for a moment selfishly regard her own happiness.

Free from all unbelief and fear, ready for every burden of joy or sorrow the Holy One might lay on her, she gave her whole being into the hand of God.

“Behold the handmaid of the Lord,” she said ; “be it unto me according to thy word.”

The gracious God gave to a woman’s lips to speak the adoring, obedient words which accepted the divine gift which was to reverse the curse of Eve.

And so the glad Story of Redemption begins in the adoring and fearless heart of Mary, the Galilean maiden, mother of our Lord.

THE SONG OF MARY.

The angel who was sent with the wonderful message of joy to Mary, also gave her tidings

which led her to the one in all the world best fitted at that moment to understand her and be her friend—her cousin Elisabeth, wife of an aged priest among the hills of Judæa, who was, in her old age, to be the mother of the precursor and herald of the Divine Redeemer.

God, who searches the heart, knows what a burden any secret of joy or sorrow is to bear alone, and in binding human hearts supremely to Himself He binds them also by countless pure and tender ties to each other.

Mary lost no time in going to visit her cousin Elisabeth. The journey was a long one—over wide plains covered in the spring with corn, and glowing with countless flowers; through quiet valleys watered by brooks; up and down rocky steeps, and slopes where sheep and goats found pasture, and bees buzzed in the sunshine among the aromatic thyme.

When she reached her cousin's home among the southern hills Elisabeth welcomed her with a greeting tender as a mother's, yet full of reverent faith.

“Blessed art thou among women,” she said, “and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? Blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of the things promised to her.”

And then at once poured forth from Mary's lips the song which must have been welling up long in her deep and silent heart.

Her nation had a rich treasury of sacred song, and many women of her people had been poetesses and prophetesses.

Two songs especially by Jewish women were well known in their Sacred Books—one a grand war-song of thanksgiving for victory over an oppressor, the other a mother's song of joy and praise for the birth of her firstborn son.

But this song of the Blessed Virgin's was the very first song of the Christian Church, and it is sung every afternoon in many parts of Christendom by men, women, and children. The first singer of the Church was the mother of our Lord.

She sings—

“My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

“For He hath regarded the lowliness of His handmaiden.

“For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

“For He that is mighty hath magnified me; and holy is His Name.

“And His mercy is on them that fear Him, throughout all generations.

“He hath shewed strength with His arm; He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

“He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble and meek.

“He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich He hath sent empty away.

“ He remembering His mercy hath holpen His servant Israel; as He promised to our forefathers, Abraham and His seed, for ever.”

You see, when Mary speaks of herself it is not to exalt herself, but her God and Saviour; it is simply of herself as of “ low estate,” as among the hungry, the humble, and meek.

The hymn is radiant with one of her own many beatitudes, the blessing on the poor in spirit. And this childlike humility, the lowliness of the forgiven child—not melancholy, downcast, and self-occupied, but glad, self-renouncing, looking upwards, joyously recognizing the goodness of God in Himself, and in His gifts to others—is the foundation-grace of Christianity.

Mary does not merely renounce this or that thing in herself; she renounces *herself*, and is at once filled with the fulness of God.

“ All generations shall call me blessed,” she sings. And so indeed she has been blessed, throughout Christendom, daily, for nearly two thousand years.

For her blessedness is not that she had a special gift to lift her apart from all. It is that the unspeakable gift given through her is a blessing for all,—for all the hungry, all the humble, of all time.

It is only the proud and self-satisfied that God Himself cannot bless; just as you cannot pour a treasure into a vase filled with dust.

And so, filled to overflowing with divine love and hope and joy, Mary stayed three months with her

friend and kinswoman, and then went back to her home at Nazareth.

THE CRADLE IN THE MANGER.

The next scene in Mary's life I have to bring you to is in a little town called Bethlehem.

It is a long way from Nazareth, among the hills.

At this time the little town was full of strangers, gathered together to be enrolled for the assessment of the tax to be paid to the great Roman emperor Augustus Cæsar, then ruler of the Jews, though not of the Jewish race. All the houses and inns for strangers were filled, and there, in a cave outside the inn, where the cattle were gathered to be fed and sheltered, were Mary and her infant Son.

His cradle was the manger where the cattle were fed. It had been written in one of the Jewish Sacred Books more than seven hundred years before, that the Saviour of the world was to be born at Bethlehem. And thus, being of the royal house of David, by order of the Roman emperor, who knew nothing of David, Mary and her betrothed husband Joseph were at Bethlehem, the city of David, when the Child Jesus was born.

Joseph was a good man, just and kind, and God had told him in a dream of the miraculous heavenly birth of the infant Saviour, and as long as he lived he took all possible faithful care of the mother and the Holy Child.

Mary had wrapped the new-born Babe in

swaddling clothes, as was the custom with the mothers of her people then; and the blessed mother, who had believed God, was quietly, in the humble shed, watching over the Divine Child who was to be the joy of all the world.

There was noise and tumult outside; but no tumult could disturb the rapture of joy and hope in her heart, remembering no more the anguish, for joy that a man, the Man to save and bless all men, was born into the world.

But they were not long alone.

Let us look for a while at this sight, the Virgin Mother and the sinless, Divine Child, familiar to us in Christendom through countless pictures; by the great Christmas festival which lights and warms the heart of our northern winters, being especially the festival of children and of the poor, when the rich gather their poor brethren to a feast of gladness, in memory of the King who was cradled in a manger, and the aged become children again, sharing the joy of the children in remembrance of the Holy Child.

And yet the glory of that scene was just what no picture can give.

The pictures show us a dark rocky cave lighted up by a feeble torch, a babe sleeping in the manger where the cattle are fed, a young mother in a rapture of silent love rejoicing over her firstborn, and Joseph tenderly watching over both.

Happy motherhood, helpless infancy! sacred to all true hearts in all lands—doubly sacred to us

since the birth of the Saviour. This is what the pictures can give.

But the unseen, inward glory, which no picture can give, is what most moves the heart.

The infant is the Incarnate Son of God, taking on Him for our sakes, in our flesh, infancy and poverty, as afterwards shame and death, to win this lost world back to God and to peace.

The mother is the chosen maiden whose obedient heart, by God's grace, gave the response which reversed the wrong of Eve.

Outside that little cattle-shed were empires, and religions, and nations struggling for the mastery, all of which, though they seemed solid as the earth, have long since perished.

Inside, in that manger, was the seed of the new life which has been growing ever since, the life which was to renew the world.

Outside was pomp, and strife, and tumult, and war, and ruin.

Inside was poverty, and peace, and redemption.

Soon the quiet of that sacred birth-night was joyously broken in upon.

A little company of shepherds appeared, desiring to see the Child. Poor shepherds, with crooks and staves to guard and lead their sheep.

The king David, of whose royal lineage Mary and Joseph came, had once been a shepherd on the hills around that very city Bethlehem.

But how did those shepherds know of the birth of Jesus?

They had been keeping watch over their flocks that very night, under the clear, quiet, starry skies, faithfully watching in their humble calling, when a heavenly message came to them. It is our belief that heavenly wonders usually come not to those who are restlessly craving for them, but to those who are humbly taking up the common burdens and doing the common duties God appoints them. A wonderful light burst on them; not a flash like lightning, not a gradual dawn like day, but suddenly bursting on them and around them, flooding the night with a sea of glory.

And with the light came the voice and the vision of an angel. The shepherds were not rejoiced at first; they were sore afraid.

The first thing men and women feel when the great light of heaven opens on them seems generally to be fear, probably because we have all of us something evil within, which makes us afraid of light.

But the angel spoke to them, and said, "Fear not."

Constantly we find the first words from heaven are just these reassuring words, "Fear not."

"Fear not," the bright angel said: "for I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people."

That is the characteristic of all true heavenly blessings. They are always to overflow.

Not for you only; for "all the people" was this good news.

And the good tidings were, simply, of that birth

of the Babe who was lying in the manger outside the inn at Bethlehem.

The great angel had known for countless ages the gracious Being who had come that night to our world as a little child.

He had known Him always as the Lord.

And now He had come as Christ, the Saviour of men, and a multitude of the happy, loving, heavenly hosts, knowing how lost this world is, and how it needed a Saviour, rejoiced.

A great multitude of heavenly beings joined the first angel. There was wonderful, beautiful music all around them in the air, floating to heaven.

And the shepherds understood the words of the hymn which the angels sang: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to man."

That was the second great universal Christian hymn.

Mary, the maiden of Nazareth, sang the first, in the quiet of a home.

A great multitude of heavenly beings sang the second under the stars.

And this second hymn all Western Christendom sings at that Holy Feast of our Lord which we call the Eucharist, to this day.

Then the glory and the heavenly music died away from the shepherds. But the joy remained.

For, without losing a minute, they obeyed the heavenly command and came to Bethlehem, and there saw what the angel had told them—the helpless Babe in the manger, Jesus the Saviour of the

world, the Desire of all nations, and the Joy of all believing hearts.

The shepherds became the first messengers of the Gospel.

They told every one the wonders they had heard and seen.

These were the first guests and worshippers of the Saviour.

The next were very different.

Not poor, ignorant shepherds; wise men of rank and wealth came next to that cradle.

In the far East, for ages, wise men had devoted themselves to the study of the stars, watching their rising and setting, and their slow relative movements, throughout the centuries, and while looking at the stars finding out many things useful to tired, toiling men, to guide them through seas and deserts.

To these, fulfilling their high work, as the shepherds were doing their lowly work, God revealed the great secret of joy.

They saw the star in the East, which in some way made them know a great king was born of the race of the Jews.

They came at once to the holy city of the Jews, Jerusalem, and said to King Herod, who was reigning there then, by permission of the Romans, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the East, and are come to worship Him."

Herod knew nothing about it, and he was

troubled. He was an ambitious, cruel man, and he did not wish any one but himself to be king of the Jews. He asked those who were learned in the Jewish Sacred Books.

And they said there was an ancient prophecy that the Ruler of the Jews was to be born at Bethlehem.

To Bethlehem Herod, therefore, sent the wise men from the East, telling them to let him know if they found the Child, thinking it was not yet too late to murder Him.

The wise men went, and there, over the place where Jesus was cradled, they saw their star again.

And they came and worshipped Him, and poured out before Him all the treasures they had brought; sweet, delicious perfumes, and spices from their Eastern trees, and gold, gifts fit for a king, for the King of men.

And then, being warned of God in a dream, they did not return to Herod to tell him anything, but went back to their own land.

So far the sacred story is all joyous and bright; light and joy and music, angels and shepherds and wise men rejoicing and adoring, and giving their best, as if the wilderness had become paradise again.

And in all the joy and music, certainly none could be deeper than that in the quiet heart of Mary, the blessed mother, cherishing the Holy Child.

We do not hear of her saying or singing anything; there are some joys too deep for words.

We only read that "Mary kept all these things, and pondered them"—weighed and measured them like precious treasures—"in her heart."

But very soon the sorrows succeed to the joys. None of God's best gifts come to the world except through anguish and toil of some kind.

And Mary was too near, and in her lowly obedience too like, her blessed Son, not to have her share in the bitter cup He drank for us, of which all who share His joy partake.

THE WELCOME IN THE ANCIENT TEMPLE.

Not far from the little town among the hills where Jesus was born was a large, ancient city, with palaces and halls of justice, surrounded by high, broad walls—the city of Jerusalem.

The city was built on several hills, and one of the highest of them was covered with the sacred buildings of a magnificent Temple. There were marble courts at different levels, reached by broad flights of marble steps. In these courts were altars of sacrifice, and great brazen tanks for the priests to wash in; and around were treasuries and dwellings for the priests, and broad, lofty porticoes to walk or sit in during the heat of the day.

The Temple itself was not very large. But it was very costly and beautiful. It was roofed and covered with gold, and there were pillars of precious woods overlaid with gold, and golden doors. Among the white marble courts it shone, one who

saw it said, like a snow mountain illumined by a golden sunrise. This sacred building was divided into two parts.

In the outer was a seven-branched golden candlestick, a golden table for sacred bread, and a golden altar where fragrant incense was burned.

This was divided from the holiest of all by a veil of the finest linen, embroidered all over with the richest colours.

Into this innermost shrine no one ever entered but the one chief priest, and he only once a year.

Altars for burnt-offerings, golden altars of incense, tables for hallowed bread—all indicating a Divine Presence.

Yet, in all the magnificent courts and costly shrines, *no image*.

The victim animals and the incense were all offered to the invisible God, Creator of heaven and earth, Maker and Ruler of men.

Into this gorgeous Temple one day the mother, Mary, and Joseph, brought the Child Jesus to present Him as the firstborn to God.

They had no offering to bring but two turtle-doves, and these they brought.

They knew that the Almighty God, who had been worshipped there for more than a thousand years, only cared for any offering because it came from the heart.

Everything in heaven and earth is His. The treasures of kings were nothing to Him. But the love and obedience of His poorest children

are dear to Him. So up the marble steps they came, with the doves and the Babe.

They had a joyful welcome in the Temple.

A venerable old man, called Simeon, had been waiting all his life to see the Redeemer so long promised.

God had told him he should not die until he had seen the promised Saviour.

And when Mary and Joseph brought in the Babe, he went to meet them, and took the Child in his arms and welcomed Him with a hymn—

“Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word :

“For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation,

“Which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people ;

“To be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of Thy people Israel.”

Again a hymn ! Hymns in the home, hymns under the starry night, and now in the ancient Temple ; from the voices of a young maiden, of mighty angels, of a feeble old man ; youth and age, men and women, and the heavenly hosts, uniting in this song of joy.

At that instant an aged prophetess came and joined them. She had been a widow for eighty years, and she also spoke of this Infant Saviour to all who were waiting for redemption.

She had been living her long widowed life in fasting and prayers in the Temple, day and night ; and now her best hopes were fulfilled, and she gave thanks to God.

But from the lips of the aged man Simeon came the first words of sorrow to Mary.

Hitherto all had been joy and triumph and thanksgiving since the birth of the Child.

But now Simeon told her there would be falling as well as rising, misunderstanding and speaking against, as well as songs of welcome, around the Holy Child.

And he told her also that a sword would pierce through her own heart.

Soon afterwards, indeed, or probably at once, the trials of the Saviour's life began.

King Herod, in his ambition and cruel jealousy, finding that the Eastern wise men had gone home without telling him where the Child Jesus was, sent men to Bethlehem and massacred every infant near His age, from the new-born babes to children of two years old.

And so the hills which had so lately echoed to the songs of the angels, resounded with the wailings of the poor bereaved mothers of Bethlehem.

But an angel had forewarned Joseph. And before this Massacre of the Innocents began, Mary and Joseph and the Child were safely out of reach of the cruel king, beyond the hills of Palestine, taking refuge by the great river of Egypt, where, thousands of years before, their forefathers had spent four hundred years in the bondage from which they had been delivered by the Prophet Moses, and whence they had passed to Judæa through wastes and wildernesses and parted seas and rivers.

There Mary and Joseph and the Babe stayed till Herod the king died, when they went back to Mary's little native town of Nazareth among the northern hills.

THE CHILD LOST AND FOUND.

Once more we are told of Joseph and Mary going up to Jerusalem. They went thither every year, to a great sacred feast, but we only know what happened there this once.

They were very joyous pilgrimages, those Jewish Passover journeys to the sacred feasts.

This feast was in memory of their forefathers having been delivered from the bondage in Egypt thousands of years before.

The whole nation, all that could leave home, came once a year to this feast.

They came in families, some walking, others on asses and mules, from every city and village and scattered hamlet among the hills; a holiday journey in spring, when the valleys and slopes were gay with flowers, and the air was soft and fresh and not too warm, and the abundant springs of that land were full to overflowing, and the brooks dancing over their stony beds, making merry music on the hill-sides, or murmuring quietly from pool to pool in the depths of the valleys.

Old friends and kindred met at these seasons who could not often meet, and busy men had leisure for quiet talk by the camp-fires at night, or along the roads and paths by day.

Often they met and sang together the grand old psalms of their people.

And the pilgrimage ended in the magnificent Temple on the hill-top, where they offered sacrifices to God, and afterwards, in the broad places of the city, or in the upper chambers, feasted joyously together.

There were great multitudes gathered together, and the children of the different families, no doubt, had their little gatherings as well as the elders.

This year the feast was over, and Mary and Joseph had turned their steps homeward.

The Child Jesus, now twelve years old, was not with them. But at first they had no anxiety ; they thought He was among their kindred or friends. They knew He would be well cared for, for all loved Him ; and they knew that wherever He was He would be doing nothing but good.

But when the evening fell, and they sought Him everywhere, and could hear nothing of Him, a great pang of fear came into their hearts.

Never before had that face and voice been absent from their evening prayer.

And they turned back and sought Him everywhere ; they sought Him three anxious days.

Perhaps Mary then felt the first sharp touch of the " sword " wounding her own heart.

And then at last they found Him among the learned men and teachers, in one of the rooms around the courts of the Temple.

He was sitting among them, listening and asking them questions ; reverent, and ready to learn.

And the teachers and learned men glanced at each other in astonishment as they observed Him.

Often indeed the questions of children lead to depths our deepest thoughts cannot fathom.

But the wisdom of this Child came from a deeper source than any of the wise men could draw from.

He was listening and asking as a child. Yet His questions must have moved them also to question both Him and themselves. For we are told they wondered greatly at His understanding and answers.

But Mary was amazed with a troubled wonder of another kind.

All these years they had been so used to His obedience and filial care ; and now He sat there at home among the teachers and rulers of their people, as if He belonged to another life than theirs.

“ Son,” she said, “ why hast Thou thus dealt with us ? behold, Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing.”

He answered her with all the tender gentleness habitual with Him ; yet, with all the childlike docility, there was no apology or regret for what He had done.

“ Wist ye not,” He said, “ that I must be about My Father’s business ? ”

He was not reproaching, only reminding her.

Had she forgotten the message of the angel, and the songs of the heavenly host, and the adoration of the shepherds, and the wise men from the East ;

forgotten for a moment that He was Son of God, and the Saviour of men ?

We do not think she had forgotten at all. But no human eye could foresee the path He was to tread. So perfect had been His lowly obedience, that it was not possible for human hearts, even those closest and likest to His, to keep always in view the majesty veiled beneath. Even Mary and Joseph understood it not.

After this He went back with them to Nazareth, and lived eighteen years longer in their humble home, doing the lowly work of a carpenter ; treading the common ways of men, subject to Mary and Joseph ; increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

But His mother, we are told, forgot nothing of the wonderful things that had been said of Him and by Him.

His mother kept all these sayings in her heart. She did not stir about hither and thither, talking of Him. She had learned to wait and be silent. She did not always understand. But she always loved and trusted and served Him with ceaseless, reverent, tender care. And He knew it, and trusted her.

THE WEDDING-FEAST.

At the end of these eighteen years, the Lord Jesus Christ, being thirty years of age, began to preach publicly, and tell men that the kingdom of God had come.

I cannot now repeat to you His sacred story, except in so far as it is bound up with the history of His mother.

Some, a few at first, believed Him, and when He called them left everything they had in the world, whether it was little or much, to follow Him and be His disciples.

Multitudes used to gather to listen to His wonderful words, but these few were His *disciples*, who loved Him better than all else in the world.

At the very beginning of His public teaching, these disciples were invited, with Jesus and His mother, to a wedding-feast.

In the midst of the feast the wine failed. And the mother of Jesus said to Him—

“They have no wine.”

Why did she say this especially to Him?

They were poor, you remember, themselves.

How did she think her Son could remedy this want?

Had she seen Him work miracles in their own home? We are not told so. We know He never worked one miracle to satisfy any mere want of His own. His miracles were “signs.”

Did she only thus turn to Him from the natural habit we all have of turning in any need to the one most sure to sympathize? or was it simply that, knowing what He *was*, and therefore what He *could* do, she longed for Him to manifest it by doing some wonderful work?

However this may be, she did not *ask* Him

to do anything. She only laid the want before Him.

Jesus knew what she wished, and He *answered* the prayer enfolded in her words. But He did not *grant* her prayer at once.

“Woman,” He said, “what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come.”

Do the words seem harsh, addressed to a mother?

Mary does not seem to have felt them so.

The mother and the Son understood each other, and we need not try to explain.

Perhaps He had spoken to her often of this “hour” that was to come; and He could trust her to understand, and not to hurry Him.

She did understand perfectly, for she said quietly to the servants—

“Whosoever He saith unto you, do it.”

Now, there were six large stone water-jars standing by the tables, that the guests might wash their hands; for the Jews were very careful about ablutions before and after eating, not only as a matter of cleanliness, but of religious ritual.

Jesus then said to the servants—

“Fill the water-pots with water.”

And immediately they filled them to the brim.

Then He said—

“Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast.”

They went and filled the governor’s cup from the water-jars.

And when the governor tasted, it was not water,

but wine, and the very best wine ; for the governor said, turning to the host, that the custom was to *begin* with the best wine, "but thou," he added, "hast kept the best wine till now."

The governor and the host did not know how the wine had come there.

But the servants knew.

And soon every one knew ; and Mary had her desire, for all saw the miracle, and learned something of her Son's divine power and kindness ; and His disciples glorified Him.

He, the Lord of the world, was only doing quickly what He is doing always slowly.

Every year the rains and dews and waters of earth are transubstantiated, through the vine, into grapes and wine. All the miracles of the Lord Jesus are not contrary to the usual ways of God, but simply show us in a moment what God is always doing, as a burning glass gathers the rays of the sun into a point.

And His mother's share in this His first miracle, see what a type it is of true woman's work !

With quick woman's insight, she saw the want of others.

She laid the want before Him who could help, which is *prayer*.

She quietly *submitted* when her prayer seemed unheeded, but she *trusted* Him to grant all that was right in her prayer.

But she did not *wait in idleness*.

She *opened the door* for His blessing to come,

when His time had come, by telling the servants to watch and obey Him.

And then we hear no more of her.

Mother and helpmeet, her joy was in preparing the work of her Son.

Disciple and worshipper, her glory was in the glory of her Lord.

THE MOTHER'S FEARS.

Only once more do we hear anything of the mother of our Lord during the three years in which He went about the cities and villages, teaching in the streets and synagogues, and in the great Temple, and on the sea-shore, and on the sides of the hills, healing the sick, calming the storm on the lake, raising the dead.

And that once it seems as if the tender mother's fears had prevailed in her.

Multitudes were gathered around Him night and day. The priests and rulers of His people were jealous and angry, and wanted to silence Him; if no other way than this were possible, even to silence Him by putting Him to death. They said He was "mad."

And then, we are told, His mother and His brethren came outside the house where he was teaching, and desired to speak with Him; they called Him, seeking, it seems, to save Him from the dangers which threatened Him.

But He did not come, even at Mary's call. He

had come, as she knew, to save the world; not merely to make one home peaceful, but to create a world of Christian homes. And His path to this lay through darker ways than she knew.

Around Him sat the few disciples, and the crowd of needy, suffering, sick, fallen people who needed Him and whom He came to seek and to save.

And looking round on them He said—

“Behold My mother and My brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of My Father in heaven, the same is My mother, and sister, and brother.”

Did Mary go away from that house with a sad heart? Was she indeed to be nothing to Him more than others? Was she to leave Him to perish?

She also had indeed to suffer.

Did the sword from His lips, the lips of love incarnate, pierce her heart?

It has to pierce the hearts of us all, before we can learn all we are to Him and all that He is to us.

She had indeed to suffer Him to take the road which led to shame and death.

But if the sword wounded, I am sure it was only to heal, to lift her into the full breadth and glory of His purpose and life.

It was only sending her away for the moment, to draw her closer into the depths of His heart for ever.

She, mother and truest disciple—mother in that she bore Him, mother in that she accepted and did

the will of God, "handmaid of the Lord"—had to take her woman's share in the restoration of the world.

She had to sacrifice her dearest; to stand helplessly by and see Him imperil and sacrifice Himself.

And how she had learned that bitter lesson, we see in the next event in her story.

THE MOTHER BY THE CROSS.

The Lord Jesus Christ went on blessing and healing and saving some months longer.

But we hear no more of Mary His mother.

The hatred and opposition of His enemies gathered thicker and darker around Him, until it became certain they would never rest till they put Him to death.

Once more there was a great feast at Jerusalem, where His most dangerous enemies, the priests and public religious teachers, lived.

Once more His brethren tried to interfere with Him; not this time to keep Him silent, but urging Him to go and conquer His enemies by showing the works He could do.

But His mother tried no more either to urge Him forward or to hold Him back.

More and more wonderful grew His miracles of healing and His words of teaching. More and more the multitudes gathered around Him.

And more and more the hatred of His enemies became embittered. No deeds of kindness could

soften it, no manifestation of power uproot it. For it was a hatred rooted in envy and jealousy; and the more glorious and beloved and honoured He was, the more this terrible envy and jealousy grew, until at last the steadfast, malignant purpose prevailed.

Through the covetousness of one treacherous disciple, whose heart broke when he saw what he had done; through the fear and weakness of the governor, and, alas! through the weakness and fickleness of the multitudes He had succoured and comforted, His enemies, the little band who had determined He should perish, succeeded in pursuing Jesus to death.

They did not think they were murdering the Being who loved them most, and trying to quench the Light of the world; they would not admit it *was* light; they would not see His goodness. And that is the way the worst things in the world are done.

We are not told where His mother was during His last days on earth, when He raised Lazarus from the dead, and was welcomed to the city as a King, the multitude strewing garments and palm-branches in the way, and the very children singing for joy; when He cleared the great temple of the traffickers who were profaning it, and healed the blind and lame in it; or when at last one dark night His enemies found Him praying in a quiet garden which He used often to visit, and captured, and bound, and hunted Him through the long night from

tribunal to tribunal, till they brought Him at last to be nailed to the cross, and lifted up on it, to die of thirst and pain.

But when the cross was set up, and He was nailed on it, mocked by the foreign Roman soldiers, and by the priests of His own people, and by the poor, foolish crowd to whom He had been so kind, and forsaken by His bewildered disciples (all but one), then, close by the cross of shame and agony, near enough to catch the faintest whisper from the parched lips, though not suffered to soothe His anguish with a drop of water, stood His mother once more, Mary of Nazareth, fearless, tender, and quiet, among the brutal crowd of mockers and executioners, close once more to her Son.

There is nothing, you will all feel, to be surprised at in that. It was her natural place, the only place in the world for His mother.

And Jesus, in all His anguish, with the world's sin on Him and the world's redemption, had to the last a care as tender for His mother as if He had no one else to care for.

Almost the last word He spoke was to take care of her.

All the disciples had not forsaken Him. John, the most beloved of all, was standing close by.

And from the cross the Lord Jesus said to His mother—

“Woman, behold thy son !”

And to the one faithful disciple He said—

“Behold thy mother!”

They understood; and from that hour that disciple took her to His own home.

THE MOTHER AMONG THE DISCIPLES AT PENTECOST.

We do not hear any more of Mary for forty days after that day of darkness.

Many wonderful things happened in those days.

From the sepulchre where they laid the body of the Lord Jesus, securing the entrance with a heavy stone, He rose at the early dawn of the third day.

Many times He appeared to His disciples—in the quiet walk across the hills, by the familiar sea-shore, and in the upper chamber where they had met to pray and speak of Him; and at last He ascended, in the sight of His disciples, blessing them as He was wont, as He went up to heaven.

But we hear nothing of Mary again until after the ascension, when all the disciples were waiting, by His command, in Jerusalem, for a great Gift He had promised them.

They continued together in prayer and supplication, and with them were the faithful women who had ministered to Him, and *Mary the mother of Jesus*, and His brethren who had only believed in Him after He had risen and gone from them into heaven.

They were all waiting for this great Gift which the Lord Jesus had promised. And among them was Mary.

At last the Gift came.

There were wonderful signs of the Divine Presence—a rushing wind, and flames like tongues of fire lighting on them.

But the real Gift came into their hearts.

It was the holy, mighty, loving Spirit who came into their hearts to abide for ever, making them courageous, and strong, and gentle, as their Lord had been; eloquent to speak for Him, fearless to die for Him, seeking the lost as He had sought them, loving the world and each other as He had loved.

It was the day of Pentecost, the birthday, we may call it, of the Christian Church.

For it was the beginning of a new life of love and service which never since has died, and never shall die from the world.

Men and women alike shared in the wonderful inspiration, and went forth, and have been going forth ever since, in various ways and measures, to serve and save the world.

And among them was Mary, the blessed mother.

The miserable vibration of the distrusting words which had deluded Eve, and divided men from God and from each other, was broken.

No more in wretched isolation and independence, to be each “as a god”—independent of God and of each other—was to be the ambition of men.

Mary's words of blessed dependence and self-surrender had prevailed for all humanity.

“Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.”

The ideal of womanhood, not of poor, weak, crippled womanhood, but of womanhood as God made it—that is, a life which has no meaning except in relation to others, mother, daughter, sister, bride—had become the ideal of humanity ; a life whose essence is love, sacrificing and serving ; renouncing, when renunciation is the way to serve ; receiving, when receiving is the way to serve ; submitting, when submission is the way to serve ; ruling, when ruling is the way to serve ; rebuking, when rebuking is the way to serve ; silently suffering, when patience is the way to serve ; fearlessly fighting, when resisting is the way to serve ; dying, when death is the way to serve.

The Church of Christ was born into the world, going forth to carry on, through His Spirit, His miracles of redeeming love ; evermore, like Mary, the blessed mother, saying to the Saviour, of all the needs of the world, "*They have no wine*"—no joy, no strength, no life, without Thee ; like Mary, saying to the world, "*Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it* ;" and with those three watchwords, of self-sacrifice, of trust, of obedience, overcoming the world's evil things with good, and turning its good things into best, its water into wine of immortal strength and joy.

MARY MAGDALENE.

I HAVE three more stories to tell you from the part of our Sacred Books which we call the Gospels, or Good News, because they contain the most joyful tidings the world ever had—of the incarnation and earthly life, and death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And these four stories make two pairs of contrasted pictures, which between them contain some of the deepest secrets of our religion, all the secrets of our religion being secrets of light and love.

This second story is about another Mary, very different from the sweet, calm, still, patient Mary of Nazareth, mother of our Lord, to whom it was nevertheless given to be with Jesus, beside His own blessed mother, when He was dying on the cross.

Her story is a great contrast to that of the Virgin-mother, and it is especially dear to us, because it pictures to us a great truth of our religion ; that the most sinful and most miserable may be forgiven and purified and then transfigured, so as to stand beside the holiest, and be amongst the most beloved and faithful disciples and servants of God.

Perhaps I had better say that by a long, but not unbroken, nor very early tradition of Western

Christendom, these three following stories have been interwoven into one, as if they were different phases in the life of one woman.

I do not presume to pronounce on the subject, but simply give the incidents as they appear to me to be narrated in the Gospels, with all their contrasts and resemblances.

On the shores of the inland lake where the Lord Jesus spent most of His life on earth, lived at that time a most miserable woman, tormented, it is said, by seven demons, until Christ found her and with one of His calm, penetrating looks, or healing touches, or mighty words, set her poor captive, tortured spirit free, to minister, with the other holy women, to Him and His disciples. Her name was Mary of Magdala, or the Magdalene.

And at last, when the Saviour was dying on the cross, besides Mary His mother, and John the beloved disciple, two other faithful women stood there—the sister of Mary the mother, and this same rescued Mary Magdalene.

She watched beside Him to the last, and, with others, followed when He was borne to the sepulchre, and beheld Him laid there, and then still watched on until the stone was rolled to the door of the cave and closed it.

The day after the day of His death was the weekly sacred day of rest, when the Jewish people were not allowed to work.

But on the morrow, after that day, Mary of Magdala, with other of the faithful Galilean women,

rose before it was light, and took spices and fragrant ointments to embalm the dead, as the custom of her people was.

When they came, in the dusk of the morning, she found the stone with which the sepulchre was closed rolled away, and the sepulchre open; and when Mary looked in, it was empty.

The grave-clothes which had been wrapped around the dead were there, carefully folded, but the Friend and Master whom they had come reverently to embalm was gone.

They went at once to tell the apostles; and Peter, and John, the disciple who had taken the mother of Jesus to his own home, ran quickly to the grave to see.

John looked in, and Peter went in; but they saw nothing but the grave-clothes.

The Lord Jesus had told them He would rise from the dead, but they had not understood; and they went sadly away, each to his own home—all but Mary of Magdala. She still lingered, weeping, outside.

She had learned to know in Him One at once perfectly holy and unspeakably pitiful.

He had saved her, body and soul, from unutterable misery, and if He were indeed lost and gone for ever, the world had nothing else for her.

The rest might go home; the world had no home left for her. Alone, weeping bitterly, she lingered outside the empty grave, and as she stooped down towards it, lo, the grave was no longer empty. Two

radiant angels, such as those who had sung to the shepherds in the night at Bethlehem, were there, in white raiment; the one at the head, the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

The sepulchre was no longer empty, nor dark, but shining with the joyful faces of those heavenly beings. Like Mary, they thought the most sacred place left in this world was the tomb where their Lord had lain.

But the sight of the angels could not comfort Mary or roll away the darkness from her heart. The glorious vision, and even the heavenly voices, do not seem to have moved or consoled her, scarcely even to have surprised her. Her heart was too full. It was not they who had healed, and saved, and taught her. She would not have wondered that all heaven should come down to render homage to Christ; but all heaven would be nothing to her without Him.

So she stayed outside, still weeping on.

Then the angels spoke to her.

“Woman, why weepest thou?” they said.

“Because they have taken away my Lord,” she answered, “and I know not where they have laid Him.”

Then she turned herself away from them.

And as she looked again towards the light, her eyes probably dazzled by the darkness of the sepulchre, and also by the strange radiance in it, and half blinded by her own tears, Jesus Himself stood there in the early morning, outside the open tomb.

And she saw Him, and did not see Him, as is the way with sorrow. She saw, probably, *some one* there, and did not venture or care to look into His face.

He spoke to her and said, like the angels—

“Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?”

Still bewildered and benumbed by grief, she did not even know His voice. She thought it must be the gardener, for the grave was in a garden, and she said to Him—

“Sir, if thou have borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will bear Him away.”

Then Jesus simply said—

“Mary.”

The familiar name from His voice woke her as from a delirium of anguish.

She turned altogether to Him, and said but one word, “Rabboni” (Master).

And then He sent her with a message to the apostles,—the Gospel of the Resurrection.

“Go to My brothers,” He said, “and say unto them, I ascend to My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God.”

Mary of Magdala came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things unto her.

So it happened that the very first human being who saw the Lord Jesus risen from the dead, and the very first messenger of the glad tidings that He had overcome death, and was to ascend to God, was this woman.

Simply because of the unconquerable, grateful love, stronger than death, which kept her waiting at the open sepulchre when others had left.

And, to the end, in the Christian Church, for men or women or children it is the same ; it is love which opens the mind to see divine revelations, and opens the heart to receive divine messages.

For the seeing always leads to hearing, and the hearing to sending.

Ever since, when any heart turns in adoring faith and love, turns altogether to our Lord, called by name, and says to Him, "Rabboni my Master, and my Lord," He says to that heart, "Go to *My brothers* ;" that is, "All the light and joy and riches of all kinds given you are not for yourselves only, but *for all*, and in any one you serve you shall find *My brother*, and in *My brother* you shall find *Me*."

THE STORIES OF THE TWO ALABASTER BOXES.

THE other pair of contrasted pictures I have to give you are of a poor, sinful, unhappy woman, whose name is not given us in this place,* and of the still and gentle Mary of Bethany, sister of Lazarus, one of our Lord's friends, who lived in a home so good and pure that Jesus liked to be there very often. A very great contrast.

And yet, just as the passionate, wild, demon-tortured heart of Mary of Magdala was made calm and pure and patient, so that she stood beside the blessed mother Mary at the cross, so these two, the sinful woman whose name is tenderly hidden, and the gentle Mary of Bethany, stand as it were side by side, each allowed to do honour to the Saviour by anointing Him with precious perfumes.

I will call these two stories "The Stories of the Two Alabaster Boxes."

* Many believe this unnamed woman to have been the same as Mary of Magdala, and this incident, therefore, to be a part of the Magdalene's story. Some also interweave her story with that of Mary of Bethany. On this I do not presume to pronounce; I give the narrative simply as it is in the Gospels.

THE STORY OF THE OINTMENT POURED ON THE FEET
WITH TEARS.

A rich man, or, at all events, a man who had a house of his own and was able to entertain guests, and one who was thought to be very religious, once asked our Lord Jesus to a feast.

Most of the first disciples were poor, or at least men needing to work for their daily bread; but some of the great and rich also were touched by the Master's wonderful works and words. And it made no difference to our Lord whether people were great or insignificant, rich or poor. The feeling which bound Him to all men was infinite pity and boundless hope. He knew that the poorest could be raised to a life higher than any king's, and He knew that under the purple and fine linen of the richest, beat hearts weary with sorrow, and weighed down with the miserable burden of sin.

So our Lord went to the rich man's house.

He had no warm welcome there.

Perhaps the poor rich man thought he was honouring the Teacher of Galilee by asking Him to come at all.

Little courtesies which he would have naturally paid to any equal and lavished on any honoured guest were churlishly omitted,—the customary kiss of welcome, the water to wash the travel-soiled feet.

The Lord Jesus uttered no reproach, but quietly sat down at the table, saying nothing.

The doors of the reception-room were open, according to custom.

And as He reclined on a couch at the table, an uninvited visitor came in, and crept behind Him and stood at His feet.

In her hands was an alabaster box of fragrant ointment.

She was weeping bitterly; and as she stooped over His feet, her tears fell on them in floods and washed the dust from them, and she wiped the dust and the tears with the long tresses of her hair, and pressed her lips in grateful kisses on His feet, and then anointed them with the fragrant ointment.

The Lord did not say anything to show He observed what she was doing.

The neglect of the rich man and the devotion of the poor woman both seemed to pass unnoticed.

But all the while every little unkind omission and every little act of grateful service were noticed by His eyes, and had touched His heart.

All the time Simon the host, the rich, religious man, was watching with no kindly eyes both his Guest and the uninvited woman. He knew who the poor woman was; she was probably but too well known throughout the city for her wild, sinful life. And Simon said to himself—

“If this man were a prophet He would know what manner of woman this is that touched Him: for she is a sinner.”

The Lord did indeed know well who and what

she was, and what her life had been. But He also knew, what Simon did not know, what Simon's heart was, and that woman's heart, and *what she could become*. And then at last He spoke.

He *answered*, the story says (though no one had yet spoken)—He answered the *deeds* of Simon and of the woman, and the *thoughts* of their hearts.

For the Lord always answers our deeds and thoughts, and never our mere words.

“Simon,” He answered, “I have somewhat to say to thee.”

And the host said—

“Teacher, say on.”

“There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed him five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had both nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell Me therefore, which of them will love him most?”

And Simon answered and said—

“I suppose he to whom he forgave most.”

And He said, “Thou hast rightly judged.”

And as He spoke He turned not to the self-satisfied host, but to the poor, despised woman.

He spoke to Simon, but He looked towards the woman, and He said—

“Seest thou this woman?”

Simon, we know, had been seeing and judging her all the time. Now, perhaps, he expected his judgment to be justified. He little knew that all the time his proud, unloving heart had been judging the poor outcast, the holy, loving eyes of

the Master had been testing him, and making a comparison between the two, very different from his own.

He would not have let the outcast touch him. He understood a righteousness that could judge, but nothing of a love that could save.

But Jesus said—

“I entered into thine house, thou gavest Me no water for My feet: but she hath washed My feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head.

“Thou gavest Me no kiss: but this woman since the time that I came in hath not ceased to kiss My feet.

“My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed My feet with ointment.

“Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.”

And He said unto her, “Thy sins are forgiven.”

And they that sat at meat with Him began to say within themselves, “Who is this that forgiveth sins also ? ”

But to them He answered nothing. They asked nothing.

And he said to the woman—

“Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.”

In that story is the great healing secret of Christianity; redemption, forgiveness, restoration.

Sin of all kinds is hateful, loathsome, repulsive to that Holy One as it never can be to us.

His pure soul loathed it as you or I may loathe a repulsive sore, a leprosy.

And this He sees in every one of us ; in Simon, in that outcast woman, in you and in me.

But He sees it as the physician in one he knows he can cure ; as the mother in the sick babe she folds closer to her heart for the sickness, yet to whom she can bear to give painful remedies as no lower love could bear, if only they may cure.

The Saviour's whole purpose was, and is always, to save. But sin is a disease which can only be cured when it is confessed.

None can be saved from sin as long as they say, like Simon, in their hearts, " This self-complacency and hardness of judgment are not sin ; I have a right to be proud of my virtuous life, and to judge severely." That is really saying, " This disease, this sin, is *myself*, and I have no wish to be separated from it."

We can only be healed when we say, like this poor outcast woman, " This evil in me, this low life that I have led, this wrong thing I have felt or done, is *sin* ; but it is not me, *not my true self*. I hate it ; I tear it from my heart and cast it from me."

That is what she said by every tear, and every act of lowly service.

When we put sin from us as she did, thus, the holy, healing Lord can say to us, as He did to her, " This sin is deep in thee, but it is not thyself. I will cleanse it out of thine inmost heart, and thou shalt be clean. It is entwined round thy very life, but I will unwind the fatal clasp, and

thou shalt be free." And He did this for her. He cleansed her by His forgiving love, by flooding her soul with new life. And she went away, her whole being purified by the fire of a new, holy love and hope. She went away with peace in her heart, to strive to sin no more, and to serve for ever.

THE SECOND ALABASTER BOX; THE STORY OF THE
OINTMENT POURED ON THE HEAD.

About two miles from Jerusalem, the city of the great Temple, where the Lord Jesus Christ was welcomed as a babe in the arms of the holy old Simeon, where He taught the people in the wide marble courts, and healed the sick and blind and crippled, a footpath down into a deep valley and then over the brow of a high hill leads you to a village called Bethany.

It lies in a sheltered hollow of the hill, among gardens of olives and herbs and vineyards; and here and there a tall fig-tree throws its broad shadow over the flat roofs of the low houses.

In this village lived a family where the Saviour was always welcome. There were two sisters and a brother, who loved each other dearly.

These sisters were very different in character. Mary was quiet and thoughtful, and retiring; Martha was active and stirring, and liked to be busy about the house, preparing the food and serving.

The Lord Jesus loved them all, and they all be-

lieved in Him and learned of Him. For He has room in His heart and in His Church for all kinds of natural dispositions. He does not want one to be like another, any more than He would have a lily like a rose. He only desires that each should be the best possible of its own kind.

Often He found welcome and rest in that quiet village home from the strife and tumult of the great city.

We are told especially of one visit.

Martha, the active sister, had welcomed Him into the house, and He had seated Himself under the shelter of the friendly roof.

And as He sat, words of help and wisdom dropped, as was His wont, like dew from His lips.

He spoke as never man spake, of God, and His love, and how to please Him by helping one another.

The invisible world was all unveiled to Him, and its light shone through all He said. But He spoke most of the *daily steps here below*, parables, stories, brief golden sentences that every one could remember.

And as He spoke, Mary was sitting still at His feet, listening to His words. It was a very short time that His voice was to be so heard on earth.

But Martha was restlessly stirring about, doing the work of the house; not quietly and contentedly taking her share, and rejoicing thus to set Mary free to listen, but bustling about and making twice as much work as was necessary, and then fretting

in her mind against her sister for being quiet and listening ; until, at last, she could bear her own restless thoughts no longer, and she hurried into the presence of the Lord Jesus and began to complain of her sister, and to tell the Master Himself what she thought He ought to do.

Gentle and patient as our Lord Jesus was, those who were most with Him had most awe of Him, feeling most His majesty, and the disciples often waited long before venturing to interrupt Him with questions. They must have wondered much at Martha's impatience and boldness.

“Lord,” she said, “dost Thou not care that my sister has left me to serve alone ? Bid her therefore that she help me.”

She wanted Him to send Mary from her quiet place at His feet.

But Jesus answered her request to rebuke Mary with a rebuke to herself, gentle indeed, but very penetrating, unveiling to her, as His rebukes do, the little bit of self which was spoiling the good in her work, and making her unhappy.

It was not the service of others, or of Himself, that was troubling her. If it had been love that was making her so busy, she would have rejoiced that, by working herself, she was setting her sister free to listen, and she would certainly have trusted our Lord to guide Mary aright without her interference.

You must not think Martha was rebuked for working diligently. It was for disturbing her

sister at her work of listening. And you must not think Mary was sitting idle at our Saviour's feet. She was learning; and learning is quite as hard and real work as sweeping a house, or preparing food.

"Martha, Martha," He said, "thou art full of cares, and disturbed about many things."

And then the Master threw the shield of His approval around the quiet listener.

"But one thing is needful," He said: "and Mary has chosen that good part, which shall not be taken from her."

The one thing needful is the thing we are given to do by God at the moment, whether it is sitting still and listening, or moving about to serve.

He did not rebuke Martha for working, but for fretting and disturbing others.

If Martha had had her way, both would have lost; for neither would have heard the precious words from the lips so soon to be cruelly silenced.

It seems that the gentle rebuke sank into Martha's heart, and just took out of it the little bit of self which made it harsh and bitter.

For when we hear of the sisters next, they seem to understand each other perfectly.

The next time the veil is lifted for us from the home at Bethany great sorrow had fallen on it.

Lazarus, the only brother, was laid on his bed with mortal sickness.

The two sisters knew that the Lord Jesus would help them. But He was far away. In the city

where the great Temple was, His enemies had combined to put Him to death ; and He had gone a long journey with His disciples, across the desert hills beyond Bethany, beyond the river which bounded the country, into a lonely place ; out of reach, for the time, of those who hated Him.

The sisters sent a messenger across the hills and across the river, to tell Him how ill their brother was.

The messenger was to give only this simple message—

“ Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick.”

No entreaties for Him to come ; simply telling Him their trouble ; that, they knew, was enough.

When Jesus heard it, He said, “ This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.”

And the Sacred Books go on to say, “ Now Jesus loved Martha”—poor eager Martha, whom He had gently rebuked—“ and her sister, and Lazarus.”

From these words, what should we have thought would be the next thing told us ? Would it not be that He went *at once* to help them ?

He did just the contrary.

“ When He heard that he was sick, *therefore*, ” that is, *because He loved them all*, “ He abode two days still in the same place where He was.”

Think of this a little.

For it is one of the most comforting words we have in our sacred stories.

We believe that the same gracious Lord and

Friend is caring for us and loving us all now in the other country beyond the river of death.

And we tell Him, in prayer, of all that troubles us, especially when those we love are sick.

And when He does not give us what we ask at once, or even at all in this world, this story helps to make us sure it is not because He has not heard our messenger-prayers, and does not love us and our beloved, but because He *has* heard and *does* love us.

Think what the sisters must have suffered watching by their brother's dying bed.

All through the long days how they must have listened to the failing breath, and then for the Master's steps along the familiar road.

And all through the long nights how every sound that sighed over the silent land, and every creaking of the doors, or of the branches of the overhanging trees, must have made their hearts beat as if it were the rustle of His dress, or His touch on the door.

For there was time for Him to have come before the brother died.

But the Master came not. And death came. At last the feeble, interrupted breathing ceased altogether. The death-pallor spread over the brother's face.

The suffering was over, and the mortal stillness had come instead.

And then the beloved dead had to be taken out of the little deserted home, and laid in the grave.

And many friends came to comfort them.

And four sad days passed, but still no word of the Lord Jesus, their Friend.

But what was He doing all those dreary days ?
Our Sacred Books tell us.

Two days after the sisters' messenger had come from Bethany, Jesus said to His disciples that they would go back to Jerusalem.

But the disciples said—

“ Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee ; and goest Thou thither again ? ”

Then He said to them—

“ Our friend Lazarus sleepeth ; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.”

The disciples tried once more to persuade their Lord not to venture into danger.

By saying Lazarus was sleeping, He meant that Lazarus had died.

It was our Lord's way of speaking of death.

We call death the sleep which knows no waking.

He knew it as a sleep from which all shall wake.

But the disciples did not understand, though they had heard Him speak so before.

And then He spoke to them again, and said plainly—

“ Lazarus has died. And I am glad for your sakes I was not there, to the intent ye may believe ; nevertheless let us go unto him.”

Then Thomas, one of the disciples, said to his fellow-disciples, knowing the peril they would en-

counter by returning, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him."

Our Lord knew the danger better than they did. He knew that in less than a week torture and death awaited Him in Jerusalem. But He also knew that His death would be the redemption of the world.

And so Jesus and the little faithful band began the long journey to Bethany, into the land of dangers and foes, across the river, across a broad burning plain, and across range after range of dry rocky hills.

When they came at last to the village among trees and gardens, before they reached the well-known house where the loving welcome was always sure, they saw Martha coming out to meet them.

Now the good side of her busy, eager character shone out. She had heard that Jesus was coming, and she knew Him too well to doubt that He was always the same, always full of pity and succour, whatever had delayed His help.

"Lord, if Thou hadst been here," she said when she came to Him, "my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee."

Jesus said unto her—

"Thy brother shall rise again."

"I know he shall rise again in the resurrection," she said, "at the last day."

Jesus said unto her, "I am the Resurrection,

and the Life : he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live : and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this ? ”

She said unto Him, “ Yea, Lord : I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.”

But it seems as if something in His words made her feel, “ These are words for Mary, the listening sister, who always understands Him ; ” for she went away to call her sister.

She came back into the house.

Mary was not alone there. The friends who had come from the great city on the hill to comfort the sisters were sitting around her trying to comfort her.

But Martha knew the only voice that could really comfort Mary.

And quietly she went up amongst the company and spoke low to Mary, sitting still, alone in her grief, although in the presence of others, and said to her secretly, so that no one else could hear, “ The Master is come, and calleth for thee.”

Then Mary rose instantly, without speaking a word, and left the house.

When the friends who were with her trying to comfort her saw her thus suddenly rise, without explanation, they followed her, for they, knowing how she loved her brother, said, “ She goeth to the grave to weep there.”

But they were mistaken. Mary was not going

to the grave. She hastened through the street of the little town, until she came outside to the place where the Lord Jesus was waiting, just where Martha had left Him.

Then when Mary had come where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying unto Him, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, he had not died—my own brother."

Her words were broken with tears; and when Jesus saw her weeping, and the friends weeping with her, He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, and said—

"Where have ye laid him?"

They said unto Him—

"Lord, come and see."

Then Jesus wept.

And the friends around said—

"Behold how He loved him!"

They might not understand His words; but they understood the tears.

Lazarus had been buried in a cave in the side of the hill where the village stood.

A large stone closed the mouth of the cave, like a rough door.

At the command of Jesus they rolled away the stone.

And He, standing at the entrance of the open cave, lifted up His eyes to heaven and said—

"Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me. And I knew Thou hearest Me always: but for the sake of them that stand by I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me."

And then the voice, usually so quiet and gentle, was lifted high. "In a mighty voice," which echoed from the rocks, He cried to the dead—
" Lazarus, come forth."

And from the dark hollow of the cave the shrouded form came forth. For a moment he stood in the dark arch of the hill-side, swathed in the white folds of the grave-clothes, his face bound round in the death-wrappings.

Then, at the command of Jesus, they loosened the bands which cramped his limbs, and he walked forth among the awe-stricken crowd, back to his home.

Again the veil of the story falls.

We are left to imagine what the joy must have been in that home, once more complete; the welcome of the sisters according to their different characters, eager in loving services, quiet in unspeakable depth of delight, the gratitude to the Deliverer.

Many of the friends who had come to comfort Mary became disciples of Jesus from that time.

But some only envied, hated, and dreaded Him the more, and set about more eagerly than ever plotting to put Him to death.

Once more we are given a glimpse of Jesus in the home He loved at Bethany.

Six days before the great Passover-feast in the city of Jerusalem, and seven only before His own cruel death, He came to Bethany, and in the grateful gladness of their hearts they made Him a feast.

Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead, was sitting at the table; Martha was serving, as usual; and Mary was also serving, in her way.

She had brought a precious alabaster box full of very costly, fragrant ointment of spikenard. She broke the alabaster box and poured the nard on the head of the Lord, and anointed His feet, and wiped His feet with her hair.

And the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

Then there arose a little angry buzz of carping, fault-finding words.

Judas Iscariot, the one faithless disciple who betrayed our Lord, who kept the bag with the money which supplied the daily wants of the travelling band of disciples, was the first to murmur.

He knew why he disliked it. He loved money, and was a thief; and he said—

“Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?” that is, put into the bag for necessities and almsgivings, which he kept.

But the other disciples also took up the complaint. “To what purpose is this waste?” they said, looking at the broken fragments of the beautiful box, and the costly perfumes all lavished in this one minute of adoring gratitude.

And they were indignant, and murmured against her.

You remember when the poor, sinful woman poured out the ointment, that poor outcast, unbidden guest in the Pharisee's house, the Pharisee was indignant because she was too sinful to touch any righteous person ; and you remember how Jesus defended the despised stranger.

Now He also defended Mary of Bethany. "Let her alone," he said ; "why trouble ye her ? she hath wrought a good work on Me. For ye have the poor always with you, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good : but Me ye have not always."

Indeed, though they knew it not, He was not to be with them on earth more than one week longer.

"She hath done what she could," He said : "she is come beforehand to anoint My body to the burying. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her."

And so He enfolded Mary in the shelter of His praise, as in a sacred tabernacle, from the strife of tongues. And in every land and every language of the world this story is told. And these two women, so different in their characters and previous lives, the nameless, outcast penitent, and the pure and gentle Mary of Bethany, sister of the family Jesus loved, stand before us, shielded and crowned with His gracious praise.

Priest and King as He was and is, the only *earthly* anointing He received was from the hands of these two women.

Few were the words of approval He was able to speak on this sinful earth.

But it so happens that three of these were for women, for the two who anointed Him with the precious ointment, and for one other whom He saw near the treasury in the great Temple, whose brief story I must just tell you.

She was a very poor widow, and Jesus, teaching His disciples in a court of the Temple where stood the great treasure-chest, saw the people throwing their gifts into it.

Full as His heart always was of God, and of the deepest truths, yet He always saw and heard everything that passed around Him—every little word and look and movement that revealed men's characters.

And now, among the rich men who came pompously in with their large gifts, making the court ring with the coin they threw in, He saw one poor widow creeping up and quietly throwing in her poor little offering.

At once he looked up, and called His disciples, and said to them, "Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all. For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God; but she of her penury hath cast in all that she had, even all her living."

One day we believe that from that voice, as from the Judge of all, the sentence of all will come forth.

And every day we know this same Jesus, living

for evermore, is watching us as closely as He watched that poor widow, those sisters of Bethany, the outcast, weeping penitent; more ready to be pleased with us than our dearest friends can be, yet never to be pleased save with our honest, very best; because He cares not what kind of gifts we bring, but what kind of people we are.

To us, therefore, these three commendations are very precious, as showing what are the grounds of His judgment.

What, then, do these three commendations show? They show that the most fallen may repent and be forgiven and restored, not merely to some far-off, outside place, but to His feet, to His service, to His approval.

They show that the smallest acts of kindness and service are observed and never forgotten by Him.

And they show also that though He accepts the very least, He only accepts our very best.

Because in the divine treasury it is not the offering which is weighed, but the love.

PART III.

THE WOMEN OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

THE sacred history given in our New Testament is divided into two distinct portions.

The first we call the Four Gospels. These contain the story of the birth, the earthly life, the teaching, the death, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The whole period of this divine story of good news is not more than thirty-three years. By far the larger part of the record concerns only three of these thirty years, the three years in which the Lord Jesus went about the cities and villages of Palestine, teaching, healing, and helping.

In these Gospels we are told of several women—Mary, His blessed mother; His mother's sister; Salome; the mother of James and John; Joanna, the wife of an officer at King Herod's court; Mary Magdalene; the penitent who anointed His feet; Mary and Martha, the sisters of Bethany.

The second portion of the history is the story of the first years of the Christian Church after our Lord Jesus ascended and ceased to be seen among men.

The first portion, the Gospel story, tells us of something in one respect different from anything that has been since. It tells us of our Saviour walking visibly on earth, seen by mortal eyes, listened to by mortal ears, touched by mortal hands.

The second portion, called the Acts of the Holy Apostles, tells us of the beginning of a state of things which has not changed since. It begins after our Lord had ascended out of human sight, with the coming of the Holy Spirit to abide with men, invisibly, in their hearts. This was the beginning of a history which has been going on, ever since, to this day—the Biography of the One Holy Catholic Church of Christ, created and renewed perpetually by the Holy Ghost, who descended at Pentecost, and has never departed from the world since.

The beginning of this Biography is divinely recorded in the Acts, but the life itself is going on now.

In these two portions of the Sacred History, two distinct companies of holy women are brought before us.

Only one of these appears by name in both, the blessed Mary, mother of our Lord. And she is only mentioned once in the second portion.

I have told you four of the stories of the first company, the women of the Gospels. We will now look at four of the second company, the good women mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, the sacred beginning of our Church history.

The adoring gratitude of these women of the Gospels showed itself in personal service to our Lord. They ministered to Him of their wealth, or by their work, listening to His teaching, bathing and anointing the feet weary with His long journeys ; when He had died, preparing the spices to embalm Him, the spices which were never needed, because He did not remain in the tomb.

All these were personal services, never more to be needed by our glorified Lord on high.

Hunger and thirst, and weariness, and all human want, to which He stooped for our sakes, over for ever, King of kings, Lord of angels, what could He need now from poor, feeble women's hands ?

What, then, would be the place of women in the Christian Church, now Christ had gone ?

We can fancy the sisters of Bethany and the Magdalene tearfully asking, "Lord, what service can our poor hearts and hands render Thee now ? We cannot preach for Thee like Thine apostles, to the three thousand, nor go hither and thither into all the world proclaiming the Gospel to every creature. We could follow Thee, listen to Thee, anoint Thy feet, minister to Thee, thirsting and an hungred, here ; but what is there left for us to do now, unless it is to die for Thee ?"

Mary of Bethany might have found the answer in the words of gracious command, which had shielded her from the reproof of the disciples : “ *The poor ye have always with you, but Me ye have not always.*”

And just before He left the world, He spoke one parable which gives the answer to such a question, for us all, for ever.

“ When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory :

“ And before Him shall be gathered all nations ; and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats :

“ And He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.

“ Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world :

“ For I was an hungry, and ye gave Me meat : I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink : I was a stranger, and ye took Me in :

“ Naked, and ye clothed Me : I was sick, and ye visited Me : I was in prison, and ye came unto Me.

“ Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungry, and fed Thee ? or thirsty, and gave Thee drink ?

“ When saw we Thee a stranger, and took Thee in ? or naked, and clothed Thee ?

“ Or when saw we Thee sick, or in prison, and came unto Thee ?

“ And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.

“ Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels :

“ For I was an hungred, and ye gave Me no meat : I was thirsty, and ye gave Me no drink :

“ I was a stranger, and ye took Me not in : naked, and ye clothed Me not : sick, and in prison, and ye visited Me not.

“ Then shall they also answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto Thee ?

“ Then shall He answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me.

“ And these shall go away into everlasting punishment : but the righteous into life eternal.”

These words, “unto Me,” are indeed the golden thread which weaves together in one beautiful seamless vesture the ministry of women in the Gospels, and in the Christian Church ever since.

The four women in the sacred Church history, whose brief histories I mean to sketch for you next, are linked to that early company, and to us in these days, by this parable.

The first is Dorcas (or Tabitha, as she was called in another language), servant and sister of the poor. The second is Lydia, opening her house to the stranger and the oppressed. The third is Eunice, mother and teacher of babes. The fourth is Priscilla, wife of Aquila, and with him spiritual helper and teacher of the great preacher Apollos.

In these four we find indications and types of the work of Christian women ever since—clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, showing hospitality to the stranger, visiting and succouring the prisoners, teaching in the home as the mother, leading on and instructing more perfectly still, in the home:

And so we stand at the threshold of a new world, and the little company we have watched in the joyful night by the manger, by the shores of Galilee, in the village home at Nazareth and at Bethany, in the courts of the great Temple, in the darkness by the cross outside Jerusalem, in the glow of the early morning by the empty sepulchre, vanish from our gaze and reappear no more.

As with so many records of good women, the veil is raised for a minute, here and there, that they may shine on us and lead us on, and then the world sees them no more; though we may be sure they are still shining on in their own little worlds of home, or in the Father's house above.

But in their stead a new company dawn on us in the new world, walking in our common paths, dwelling in our common dwellings, doing our common duties, glorifying for us all common

things by that inward light which may also be ours.

The first name that comes out distinctly is that of Dorcas, and she is revealed to us first when her life seems finished.

Let us look a little while at her, this first woman of the Christian Church, part of whose life is unveiled to us for our learning:

She is lying pale and stiff on the bed of death, and around her are gathered a forlorn and sorrowful company, weeping bitterly, poor widowed women with none to help them.

They have lost one who loved them just *because* they were poor and forlorn, and wanted love.

The kind eyes which used to smile on them are closed, and the busy fingers which used to work for them are stiff and helpless.

They are gathered around her dead form.

They are clothed, many of them, in her gifts, and in the work of her hands, and probably also have brought with them other garments which she made, just to honour, as it were, the kind hands that can work no more, by laying before them these memorials of their helpfulness.

Yet among this little company there is not merely sorrowful recollection. There is a tremor from time to time as of expectation.

They start at any unexplained sound, and turn to the door.

They have sent messengers, and are expecting an answer.

But what answer can come that shall break that death-silence ?

There have been wonderful works in the cities and villages around that little town of Lydda where Dorcas lived : sick healed, lepers cleansed, the lame made to walk, the blind to see ; nay, more than once, the dead raised to life again.

They hardly dare to hope ; yet the life they have lost was so sweet and precious, and the Apostle Peter, to whom their messengers have gone, is one of the greatest of the apostles !

They cannot give up hope.

At last the expected steps come up the stairs. The door opens ; the great Apostle Peter enters. And when they see him, the poor forlorn women can do nothing but go on weeping, and show him the garments Dorcas made “while she was with them.”

For she is not with them now : that lifeless form is not Dorcas ; only the forsaken tent of her loving spirit.

The Apostle Peter sees and listens, and then he sends them all out of the death-chamber.

Such a request as he had to ask must be made in solitude with God.

Left alone in the deserted upper chamber, he kneeled down and prayed, and then, turning to the body, he said—

“Tabitha, arise.”

And the departed spirit heard, and returned from the unknown land.

The death-closed eyes opened ; and, seeing Peter the apostle, she sat up.

And he took her hand and lifted her up.

And then he called back the weeping company, and as they re-entered the upper chamber, the bed of death was empty, and their dead benefactress stood beside the apostle, and he presented her to them once more, alive.

A great joy, certainly, to the poor weeping widows who had lost their friend.

But was it a joy to Dorcas—Tabitha—safe on shore in the presence of our Lord, in the paradise to which He calls His disciples on high, to come back to be tossed again on the billows of this world; to make a few more coats and garments, and bind up a few more wounded hearts ?

Yes ! I am sure it would be a joy for any servant of God, angel or saint, to come down from the highest place, to serve the meanest and neediest, if God told them to do so ; for the joy of heaven is service ; the joy of the Master, into which they enter, is saving ; and the law of heaven is love.

This is the first woman we are told about in this second part of the Sacred Story.

Very simple little things are told us of her.

She loved and cared for the poor, and made garments for them with her own hands.

Perhaps she was rich, yet felt that the richest gifts are doubled by the touch and work of loving hands.

Perhaps she was poor herself, and could only

earn the joy of giving by working with her own hands.

But however this may be, this simple story is the key to a new, secret treasure-house of help for the world. Tabitha (or Dorcas) stands first of a great multitude of Christian women who have spent their lives in such works of mercy, and been so loved and lamented; happy wives and mothers, who, looking out from their own plentiful homes on the want around, have gone forth to clothe the naked; sorrowful widowed women, who have found healing for their sorrows in relieving the wants of other sufferers; rich and great women, who have delighted to stoop to serve the lowest; poor women, with a wealth of love in their hearts, which has made their scanty store, which seemed scanty even for one, suffice for the needs of many; women in high places, who found time, amidst the duties of their high station, to serve the poor; women who were able to have the joy of abandoning all other work for these works of charity. A blessed army of mercy fighting against the sorrows and distresses of this needy world; and as the leader, this one Syrian woman, who made the coats and garments in her own little town of Lydda, nearly two thousand years ago, around whose death-bed the poor she had succoured wept.

LOIS AND EUNICE.

THE next two women I would briefly bring before you are a mother and a grandmother. They come, as it were, at the head of the happy company of Christian mothers who have, by their teaching and living, sown the first seeds of holy life in the hearts of their sons and daughters.

This we believe to be the model typical life of good women, this motherly training of children; and all other spiritual work done by women to be good and divinely appointed chiefly as it resembles this.

These two women were Jewesses, living among a population who worshipped the gods of the Greeks.

The grandmother was called Lois, and the mother Eunice. Eunice had married a Greek, who was probably dead at the time our story begins; and she had one son, called Timotheus.

These women worshipped the one good and true God, and they had a copy of the older Hebrew Sacred Scriptures, and could read them; and they taught the boy Timotheus the beautiful and terrible stories and prophecies, and the glorious hymns in these books.

At first they would talk to the child of these

things, before he could read for himself; for from quite early childhood Timothy learned the Holy Scriptures. And then, as soon as he was able, they taught him to read for himself, as Christian mothers do all over the world to this day.

It is a beautiful sight in our homes to see the little ones learning the sacred stories and hymns from their mothers, and then, when the father is at leisure, saying them over to him. For the father being usually at work out of the house, it is the mother who teaches the little ones at home.

Lois and Eunice had only this one little son to teach.

And no doubt they taught him not only the beautiful histories in their Sacred Books, but the great prophecy and promise in it—the prophecy of a great King sent from God, who was to deliver their people and all the world. For the wise men of their people were beginning at this time to say that now, any day, this anointed King and Saviour might appear.

The hearts of their people were full of expectation.

And one day, at the gates of this little town among the mountains, where Lois and Eunice and Timothy lived, appeared two strangers, countrymen of their own, with the wonderful news that this great expected King had really come, had lived, had been put to death in Jerusalem, the great city of their people, had risen from the dead, and was now exalted above all, King and Lord in heaven.

One of these Jews was called Paul, a small, sickly, suffering man in appearance, but the greatest missionary that ever was, with the most fervent heart and the clearest mind ; the other, called Barnabas, was grander to look at, and most gentle and tender in heart.

Gradually more and more people gathered around these strangers, who came as heralds of the unseen King, and among them must have been these two Jewish women, their own countrywomen, with the boy.

They were collected outside the gates, near the temple of one of the Greek gods, called Jupiter, the king of gods.

Near at hand was a poor cripple, who had been lame from his birth, and had never walked.

He was among the crowd by accident, probably brought by his friends, and set on the temple steps every day to receive alms from the worshippers at the shrine.

But he was listening with his whole soul to the words of Paul the great missionary.

And as he drank in the words with eyes and ears, Paul's eye met the earnest gaze of the poor cripple, and with his heart always open to suffering, he saw that the lame man was taking in the good tidings ; that the gracious presence of the Lord Christ, the Friend of sinners and Saviour of sufferers, was shining into his heart ; that he had faith to be healed.

And all at once the great missionary stopped in

his eloquent speech, and called out in a loud voice to the cripple—

“Stand on thy feet.”

And the cripple rose on his feet, and sprang up and walked.

Then all the worshippers of the Greek gods—of Jupiter, king of gods, and of Mercury, messenger of the gods, supreme in eloquent speech—cried out in a tumult of delight and awe—

“The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.”

And they called Paul, with his insignificant look and persuasive speech, Mercury; and Barnabas, his grand-looking, silent companion, Jupiter.

And the priest of the temple of Jupiter came with the people, and made haste and brought oxen garlanded with flowers, for sacrifice to offer to the strangers.

Lois and Eunice and Timothy must have trembled when they saw this; for their people were taught it was a great sin to worship any but the one Eternal God.

But when Paul and Barnabas heard what they were saying and doing, they rent their garments, as was the custom for relations to do at deaths and funerals, to show how grieved they were, and ran in among the people and said—

“Oh, men, why do ye such things? We also are men like yourselves, with joys and sorrows like your own. We preach unto you that ye should turn from these empty, lifeless idols to the living

God, who made heaven and earth, and the sea, and has done good to all, giving all showers from the sky, and filling our hearts with food and gladness."

But all they could say could scarcely restrain the people from offering their sacrifices.

Until, with the fickleness so common to excitable crowds, they were persuaded quite the other way, by some enemies of Paul and Barnabas, who had followed them from another city, and spoke evil of them.

They could not deny the healing of the cripple, but they began to doubt and distrust the character of the power which had done it.

Miracles cannot change men's hearts ; only divine light and love shining into them can do that.

And so it happened that the misguided multitude turned furiously against the stranger missionaries, and hurled stones at them until Paul lay wounded and stunned on the ground, and they thought he was dead ; and then, dragging the poor bruised and bleeding body out of the city, they left it there to perish.

But the words and works of healing had not been in vain.

There were already disciples, Christians with hearts won to the Saviour they had proclaimed by Paul's message, and they gathered around him, and he rose up again, and came back into the city.

Among them were Lois and Eunice, and no doubt the poor healed cripple. Perhaps Paul went

back into the house of Lois and stayed there until the next morning, and kind hands bound up the wounds and bruises ; for the next day he was able to walk away to another city, undaunted by all he had suffered, to give the same good tidings to all who would hear.

Two years afterwards, when Paul the great missionary came back to Lystra, the little town among the hills, he found there a little Christian company, and among them not only Lois and Eunice, but the boy Timothy, now growing into a young man.

And between Timotheus and Paul sprang up a great friendship, so that the young man and the old went forth together on many a long and perilous journey, to make the name of Christ known and beloved through the world.

But, as usual, the veil is soon drawn again over the lives of the women.

The mother and the grandmother had sown the precious seed in the heart of the child. Believing themselves, first, in the Lord Jesus, they had helped to lead him also to the faith ; and then they had given their joy and treasure, the light of their lonely home, to be a light-bearer, with Paul the great apostle, to the world.

Type of what Christian mothers have been doing ever since, and are doing every day now ; preparing the sacred vessels for the Master's use, then presenting them in the temple of His Church.

Silent, lowly work, sowing the seed and then

yielding the harvest to other garners ; humble, unnoticed work, yet lying at the root of the deepest benedictions and victories in the world.

Before we lay aside this family picture of Eunice, Lois, and Timotheus, I should like for a few minutes to detach one venerable figure from the group, and place her beside another set before us in the stories of the Gospels.

These are two bowed and aged women. The natural glow of youth and beauty has faded from them, yet if you look steadfastly you will see a light in the tear-dimmed eyes, a dignity in the feeble forms, and a victory and peace in the faded faces which you will look for often in vain in the hey-day of hope, and in the fulness of strength.

Growing old! Have you not a dread of it ? To take the second place where you were used to take the first, to be ruled where you were wont to rule, to see the powers of others ripening while your own are getting feebler ! To feel the world slipping from your feeble grasp, to become a burden yourself, instead of one to whom others cling for help !

Other ills are partial and uncertain, but this, unless you die, is certain and universal. You may escape bitter bereavement, poverty, blindness, accident, years of pain ; but enfeebling, all that is meant by growing old, you cannot escape.

To die is a moment ; but to grow slowly old, to fade and decay consciously, year by year, would you not be glad of an elixir against this ?

And it is precisely this elixir of perpetual inward youth, this power to restore, the life of the new creation, which is one distinctive glory of our Christian faith.

It changes the sunset into dawn, the chill fading into night into the gentle dawning of a better day.

It does also raise and ennable all that is naturally noble and beautiful and high amongst us. But, beyond this, it takes the refuse, the outcast, the worn out, the cast aside, and out of the very dust of the ground moulds a beauty surpassing all other beauty, and inspires with a life which never dies, and a youth which never fades.

It is indeed an inexhaustible fountain of youth, and again and again we see it springing forth in our beloved aged ones with a freshness sweet as childhood and strong as youth, even through the decay of natural life.

And the secret is just flashed on us in the pictures of these two aged women: one, Lois the grandmother, cherished and honoured in the home; the other, Anna the prophetess, widowed and lonely, yet living a life of prayer and service in the Temple.

Two of the chief ministries of the aged: the loving, lowly ministry to the little ones; and the priestly ministry of prayer and intercession, consecrating the hours of repose and solitude at the close of the day of life, as already on the threshold of the heavenly Temple.

There can be, and often are, most blessed ministries and especial links of tender affection between

the aged and the children, between those in the generations of grandmother and grandson, like Timothy and Lois.

The fathers and mothers are often worn out with the toil of providing the daily bread, or in some way or other with the heavy cares of life's busy, hot noonday: and the sweet, joyous morning and the quiet, peaceful evening suit each other. Children have a power of helping and cheering the aged that the busy, heavy-laden people in the ages between do not possess.

And the aged have often precious stores of knowledge and mellowed wisdom, and leisure to unfold to them; living recollections of good words and deeds, made priceless by the silence that must so soon fall on them.

The mother Eunice had many duties to take her away; the household to provide for, to rule, and to train.

And many an hour the child Timothy must have spent by the grandmother Lois, as she poured into his heart the tender and stirring stories of her Sacred Scriptures.

It was because Lois's own heart and mind were rich in treasures of wisdom and knowledge, that she could thus be a fountain of interest and delight to the child.

And one other thing I want you to observe in this aged woman.

She kept her mind and heart open to the end, open to take in new ideas and to glow with new

affections, to learn what was worth knowing, and to love what was worth loving.

It was not till the prime and noon of life were past that Lois heard how the King and Saviour her people were looking for had come at last.

But she had kept her heart open to learn, and so, when the wonderful Good Tidings came, she was ready for it, and embraced it, and helped to move her grandson to embrace it also.

It is this that helps to keep old age fresh. When any living thing ceases to take in new material and grow, it must begin to decay.

The Divine Spirit of love and life in the heart keeps it fresh by keeping it open to learn.

Think, then, of this one picture of the grey-haired aged woman, with the bright boy at her feet, making the sacred old stories living to him before he could read, and then patiently teaching him to trace out the well-known words in the Sacred Books.

Then see her welcoming her countryman, the bruised and bleeding missionary Paul, drinking the glad tidings of great joy from his lips, and recommending them to the boy with all the sanction of her life-long goodness and truth.

And now let us turn to another picture.

On the top of the hill in the ancient city of Jerusalem, rises the great Temple of the Jewish nation.

The Temple itself is not large. It is like a small costly jewel-casket.

It is roofed and ceiled with gold, the walls are covered with gold, the lamps and censers and table in it are of gold.

There is no image of any god in it. The casket is the shrine of an invisible treasure. The Presence of God abides in it.

All around this golden shrine are wide marble courts, for different grades of worshippers, divided from each other by marble balustrades and broad flights of steps. Round the courts are the dwellings of the priests and servants of God.

The whole space is sacred, and carefully guarded from intrusion.

Somewhere in this sacred enclosure lived a very aged woman. She had been married seven years, and then, widowed and alone, she had lived eighty-four years in this Temple, never departing from it; present, no doubt, at the sacrifices, and the great choral services of song and instruments of music; moving quietly about the great spaces and the dwellings, but never leaving the Temple night or day.

Every evening she would, doubtless, offer prayer and praise with the multitudes outside the shrine, whilst the fragrance of the incense burning within breathed forth into the still air, until at last the white-stoled priests came forth and blessed the people with the ancient three-fold benediction.

Every night she would see the sacred light from the seven-branched candlestick shining dimly from the golden shrine which none but the priest's feet might enter.

Every morning she would know of the sacrifice of the lamb offered daily on the altar.

But she would also see much that saddened her there. For, amidst this outward worship, there was much hollowness and covetousness ; the very courts of the Temple profaned by traffickers, making market of lambs and doves for sacrifice, and unholy hands lifted up too often in sacred words and acts.

Anna's faith and hope, as always in this fallen world, even in the very Temple itself, must have had to maintain their glow and fire against many a chilling blast.

But, all those four and eighty years, her heart was fragrant with incense, ever fresh—the incense of perpetual prayer, and glowing with the inextinguishable light of a great hope.

For herself, in her own earthly life, hope had died after those seven years of marriage ; but the indying hope for her nation and for the world kept her heart fresh.

That golden shrine, that light ever burning, those perpetual songs, and incense, and sacrifices, were all witnesses to a great Hope, the hope of the Saviour, divine and human, who was to come in the latter days to this very Temple, and to redeem the world.

And at last the King and Deliverer came, came as a little babe borne in the arms of Mary His mother. Think of Anna's long waiting of eighty-four years, and then picture the hope fulfilled.

See the aged woman, with the glow of fulfilled hope in her eyes, as she sees the Babe taken into Simeon's arms, and hears, in the blessed evensong of his old age, which is as the matin-hymn of Christianity—

“Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace: for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation.

“A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel.”

And then Anna's lips also were opened, and she spake of Him to all that looked for redemption in Israel. Revered and beloved and trusted, her words, the fruits of long years of prayerful silence, have weight, and are listened to as among the most sacred ever uttered in that sacred place.

The hope had dawned into joyful fulfilment. The long listening had ended in the hearing and telling of the good tidings. And Anna stands before us a second beautiful type of what loneliness and widowhood and old age can become in Christian women, the heart itself becoming a golden shrine full of fragrant incense of prayer and praise, the silent hours musical with praise of the good God, and the lonely hours rich and peopled with loving intercession for all that need.

LYDIA.

ALL the men and women we have been considering hitherto were from the East, not from the West. Up to the time I am now to tell you of there was not one European Church ; all the first Christians were Asiatic.

But one night, among the ancient cities of Troas, a vision appeared to the great missionary Paul which changed the course of the world.

He had been going about the ancient cities of Asia, strangely hindered, not by persecution, but by a sacred inward voice, which he knew to be divine, forbidding him to preach in one place and another, until at length one night a European man, a Macedonian, a countryman of the great conqueror Alexander who once invaded Hindustan, stood by him in a vision and said—

“ Come over and help us.”

And immediately all the baffling and perplexing hindrances of these last days became clear to the apostle. For he perceived that the Holy Spirit was calling him away from Asia, his native land, to preach the good news in Europe.

He did not hesitate a day, but took the first ship he found starting for the opposite coast, and in two days sailed past the islands, crossed the sea, and landed in the new world of the West.

The great ruling people of the world then were the Romans, whose chief city was Rome, whose soldiers and governors, and laws and roads, were in all parts of the world.

St. Paul did not linger on the coast, but went on by one of those Roman roads to the first Roman city he could reach, with a colony of Roman soldiers and a Roman governor. It was called Philippi.

In those days, just as the great military people who ruled the world were the Romans, the great merchant people were the Jews, Paul's own countrymen.

The Romans had one imperial city called Rome, but they were dispersed all over the world as conquerors and governors.

The Jews had one sacred city called Jerusalem, where the golden shrine of the Temple was, but they were scattered all over the world as merchants, exchanging goods and lending money, and becoming rich wherever they went.

The Apostle Paul knew, therefore, that wherever the Romans found it worth while to found a colony to rule, the Jews would most probably find it worth while to settle, to carry on trade.

And so it happened at Philippi. He had left the sea-coast and crossed the hills. A wide plain stretched before him, level as the sea; in spring green and fertile with gardens and cornfields, watered by a river and by many perennial streams, so abundant that Philippi was called the place of fountains.

As he looked down from the slopes of the hills, fragrant with roses, he could see the traces of the great Roman rulers everywhere, in bridges and roads and fortifications, in the great market-place, and in the large round open theatre or circus, where they amused themselves with wrestlings and races and mock battles.

The Romans built so solidly, that after nearly two thousand years you can see the ruins still, at Philippi, and everywhere.

Yet the work of that one Jewish missionary has lasted longer, and spreads wider.

Wherever the Jews went they took their religion with them, the worship of the one holy God, which they met to celebrate especially on the seventh day of the week.

On the seventh day, therefore, Paul the apostle and his companions went to the side of the river, and found a little round building open to the sky, where his countrymen and countrywomen used to meet to pray. They usually met by a river, or by the sea-shore, because their religion required them to make many ablutions. On that day, it seems, the worshippers were mostly if not altogether women.

And among them was one attentive listener, who was the first person in Europe who became a Christian.

She was not a European nor a Jewess by birth. She was an Asiatic, one of a guild of merchants of the city of Thyatira. But she had embraced the

Jewish faith in one living God, and the Jewish hope of the Saviour. Her name was Lydia.

She was evidently a woman of wealth and consideration in the city. She had a household of servants and of people whom she employed. And she ruled them and managed her commercial affairs.

Perhaps she was widowed, and was carrying on her husband's commerce for the sake of her children. But this we do not know.

Amongst us few women would think it worth while to undertake the labours and anxieties of commerce for their own sakes; but for the sake of husband, or children, or people dependent on us, there is no honourable employment which women, if capable of it, would think too hard or too difficult—from the queen on her throne to the widowed mother guiding her farm.

Happily most women are not called to such battle with the world, but Lydia seems to have been one of these.

That Sabbath morning she had come with her household to worship God, in this quiet place beside the river, outside the city.

And there came the stranger from Asia with his friends, the missionary with the small stature and insignificant appearance, and the wonderful eloquence which had made the Asiatic people of Lystra take him for Mercury, the god of eloquence.

His speech was no ordinary oration about piety or good works. It was a proclamation of a King and a Kingdom, a message straight from heaven.

The anointed Saviour of the world, the promised King of the Jews, he said, had come. He had lived and died and risen again, and lived for evermore the Lord and Friend of all men.

And as Lydia listened it was with her as if a divine hand came and gently unlocked the door of her heart.

The story says, "The Lord opened her heart, that she attended to the things spoken of Paul."

It was no sudden flash of fiery illumination. The Dayspring from on high had silently dawned, and now Lydia saw it. The doors and windows were open, and the glorious, joyful light came pouring into every corner; and the new world shone before her.

A Father, a Saviour, an Almighty Friend,—life in His love and service, begun now, and never to die.

Lydia could not be content to remain alone in his faith and joy. She gathered her household round her, and together they all were baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, vowing to be servants of the Lord Jesus Christ for ever.

And this household of Lydia's was the first beginning of the Christian Church in Christian Europe.

Lydia's open heart opened her house and all she had—to be no more her own, but her Redeemer's.

The days when the alabaster box could be broken, and the precious ointment poured on the Saviour's head and feet, were over; and the days

when He sat by the treasury of the Temple and graciously watched the poor widow casting in her two mites.

But Lydia's heart, and therefore all she had, was as much given to God as the two mites of the poor widow. For grateful love will always find ways to serve.

Lydia's alabaster box and precious ointment were her house and its hospitalities. The feet on which she poured it were the needy, the stranger, the servants of Christ. She also had felt the echo of the Saviour's "unto Me."

She entreated Paul and his companions to make her house their home.

At first the apostle hesitated. It was not his custom to depend on any. He chose rather to work night and day with his hands, that he might be free to preach at his own cost.

But Lydia entreated.

"If you have judged me faithful to the Lord," she said, "come into my house, and abide."

And the generous heart prevailed, and for a few days the great missionary, who knew so well what hunger and thirst, and homelessness, and weary travel and toil were, was cared for as in his own early home.

But not for long.

The battle with evil and persecution never ceased long in the faithful warfare of St. Paul's devoted life.

Soon there was an angry tumult in the city.

like his Master, full of pity for those oppressed in body and soul by the devil, the apostle had compassion on a poor demon-possessed, insane slave-girl who used to wander about the streets, and healed her and restored her to her right mind.

Her masters, who made money by her wild utterances, were enraged, and arrested Paul and his companions, and persuaded some unjust judges, quite contrary to the law, to have them violently scourged without trial in the market-place, and then thrust bruised and bleeding into a dark, dismal dungeon.

That must have been a mournful night for Lydia and the little Christian company in her house.

No doubt they slept little. No doubt they prayed much.

And in the middle of the night the earth began to tremble and heave, doors were thrown open, and the city was in the panic of an earthquake.

But the next morning Lydia had the joy of seeing the apostle and his companions enter her hospitable doors again, and of welcoming them once more to her home.

They had a joyful story to tell.

In the dead of night, in the dungeon, wounded and ill-used and fettered as they were, the joy of the presence and love of God so filled the hearts of Paul and his companion Silas, that they sang loud hymns of praise. And then suddenly the solid prison walls heaved with the earthquake, and the heavy doors broke open. The jailer, who had

dealt very roughly with them, perhaps thinking the prisoners had escaped, drew out his sword and would have killed himself. Probably he was an old Roman soldier, hard but loyal, who would rather have died than fail in his military duty.

Paul, with his heart always free and at leisure to think of others, and rejoicing to forgive, saw what he was doing, and called out in a loud voice, "Do thyself no harm ; we are all here."

And the jailer, relieved and full of gratitude, brought a light, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and said, "What must I do to be saved ?" Perhaps he only meant, in a bewildered way, how could he escape punishment on account of the opening of the prison ? Perhaps he had heard dimly that the strangers had brought some wonderful tidings. But however this might be, at once, in the night, Paul told him of the Lord Jesus ; and, like Lydia, he and his household believed in God, and were baptized. Then he washed the bruised limbs of his prisoners, and set food before them.

And there was great rejoicing in the prison.

In the morning the unjust judges, perhaps terrified by the earthquake awakening their consciences, went in state to apologize to Paul and Silas for their shameful imprisonment, and brought them out with honour.

So once more there was a joyful gathering of friends and Christian brethren in Lydia's house, and among them probably were some of the household of the jailer.

The friendships of the early Christians in those days of persecution were very strong, and no doubt the household of the prison and the household of the rich and generous Lydia would often meet.

Thus to all time that open-hearted lady stands before us the type and leader of a beautiful company of Christian matrons who have ruled households, estates, and works of industry, large or small, and even kingdoms, in the service of God and man, and yet never lost the true womanly abdication and gentleness and simplicity, delighting to give when giving is the way to serve, intent to rule when ruling is the way to serve, it as devotedly and as humbly serving at the head of a household or a kingdom as the lowliest servant subject they have to guide and rule.

For, from that time to this, hospitality, the care of the household, of guests, and of strangers, in the cottage or in the palace, has been among the most frequent duties of Christian womanhood.

And sacredly uniting the common household duties with the alabaster box, the costly ointment, the spices at the tomb, we read the golden words—

“I was naked, and ye clothed Me: sick, and in prison, and ye visited Me: a stranger, and ye took Me in.”

AQUILLA AND PRISCILLA.

THE pictures we have hitherto looked at of Christian women have been of those who seem to have been, for some cause or other, solitary ; for whom Christianity transfigured loneliness and bereavement into leisure and opportunity for noble and loving service in the wider circle of all whom they could succour.

We will now look at a woman whose service lay in that blessed companionship of Christian marriage which more than doubles the power of each.

Lydia, Lois, Eunice, Dorcas, are mentioned always alone. Prisca, or Priscilla, and Aquila are never mentioned except *together* ; the two lives knit into one.

They were living, when first we hear of them, at Corinth, one of the most beautiful cities of the ancient world, and also one of the most luxurious and corrupt.

It was built on a narrow neck of land joining two seas. Above it towered a rocky height crowned by fortresses and temples, which threw its shadow, morning and evening, on the two opposite seas.

The sides of the hills were terraced, and covered with the palaces of the rich merchants of all nations who lived there. The white colonnades,

enriched with pillars of porphyry, shone afar across the blue seas. The bays on both sides were full of the ships of all nations.

But Aquila and Priscilla did not live in a palace. They were tentmakers, and had only just come to Corinth, because, with the rest of their people, the Jews, they had been driven out of Rome by a decree of the Roman Emperor Claudius.

In those days people who travelled had to carry tents with them, and very many of these black, hair-cloth tents were made and sold on these coasts.

Just after these two came as exiles to Corinth, the great missionary Paul also landed there, and at once they became intimate.

Being countrymen, they could understand each other's language, and met on the Jewish day of rest at the Jewish prayers.

But they and the great missionary had another link with them. He also had learned to make tents. His family were wealthy enough to give him a learned education, but it was the custom in those days for the sons of rich men among the Jews to learn a handicraft, that they might be masters of circumstances, and able to maintain themselves by the work of their hands if their wealth was lost.

Paul had given up his calling as a Teacher, and had suffered the loss of all things for his Christian faith, but he would not willingly be dependent on any one, and therefore he was glad to come and live with his compatriots Aquila and

Priscilla, and work in their workshop at their trade.

He lived two years with them. Every seventh day he went to the gathering-place of his people for prayer, and spoke to them and reasoned with them from their Sacred Books, and convinced many, both of his own people, and of the mixed population of the city, that our Lord Jesus Christ is the Saviour and Lord of all.

In this city also, his countrymen who did not believe in Christ were greatly irritated, and dragged him before the tribunal, and endeavoured to get the governor, Gallio, to silence him.

But Gallio was of a sweet and tranquil temper, and just and candid, and would not suffer Paul to be wronged.

He thought it was a mere sectarian quarrel among the Jews, and would hear nothing about it, and cleared the court of them all.

So Paul went on living with Aquila and Priscilla, making tents with them ; they welcoming the disciples to their house, and he teaching all who came.

They all had to work hard for bread, often night and day ; yet, weak and suffering as St. Paul often was, he was always ready to give and to explain his great message.

Thus it happened, that when the great missionary left them, Aquila and Priscilla themselves were able to teach others what he had told them.

When Paul left to go to Ephesus, a great city

on the opposite shores of Asia, they went with him.

Twice more we hear of them, and always together.

Soon after St. Paul had spent this time with them at Corinth, we are told that a very able man named Apollos, from the city of Alexandria, a great centre of learning and philosophy, came to the city of Ephesus, where Aquila and Priscilla then were, preaching of the great things which had appened lately in Palestine. He was a learned man, learned in the Greek philosophy as well as in the Jewish Scriptures, and he was also endowed with fervent eloquence, the utterance of a mind full of fire. But he knew little of Christianity compared with what the great missionary Paul had taught Aquila and Priscilla. And so it happened that when one Sabbath day they heard him speak eloquently and fervently, although with imperfect knowledge, in the Jewish synagogue, they went up to him and spoke to him, and took him home to their house, and told him all the wonderful things St. Paul had taught them.

Both the husband and wife are mentioned as not only making the gifted stranger welcome in their home, but as "explaining to him the word of God more perfectly."

Thus, though they themselves continued to be humble tentmakers, they fed the fire of the eloquence of this great teacher with the fuel of divine knowledge; and whilst they went on quietly

earning bread to give to others, and welcoming the needy and the stranger to their house, their pupil Apollos was kindling an illumination in city after city, and leaving a track of light behind him through all the land.

Yet once again the Apostle Paul tells us that once Aquila and Priscilla risked their lives for him.

They had returned again to Rome, and the expression St. Paul uses in his greeting to them is very remarkable.

“Greet Priscilla and Aquila,” he says, “my helpers in Christ Jesus: who have for my life laid down their own neck: unto whom not only do I give thanks, but all the Churches of the Gentiles. Likewise greet the Church that is in their house.”

He speaks of the two all through as *one*, as if they had but one life to lay down; one in helping him, one in readiness to die for him, one in the loving gratitude of all Christians, one in the blessed home which was as a nursery and meeting-place for the Church.

And so the veil falls on the earthly story of these two. Together we see them in the last glimpse we have of them, making their home a place of succour and welcome to all, and then they fade from our gaze for ever.

Did they die together, enter the next life un-parted—called home together by the same merciful summons? This can seldom be. But we know that whatever the paths by which they reached the Father’s House above, they are together there, now.

And for ever their lowly, loving, helpful lives shine before us, a picture and a pattern which God continually renews for us in our Christian homes.

Some have debated whether Priscilla were of nobler birth or of stronger character than her husband, because of her being mentioned at all, and because sometimes her name is placed before his. But this indeed matters not. We do not need to measure by greater or less, when the more of one only supplies the less of the other, and the variety part of the beauty. Whatever gifts each had belonged to both, and could not be reckoned apart. As in all true marriage, their gifts were far more than doubled by being united, as their burdens lost more than half their weight by being shared.

Together they worked at their tents ; together they welcomed the Apostle Paul and learned of him ; together they found out the eloquent Apollos and brought him to them and taught him ; together they would have laid down their life to save the life of their great friend and teacher ; together they made a gathering-place and a home for the Christian Church at Rome.

Together they shine before us, a perfect type of the common labours, common sufferings, common earning and teaching which constitute the fruitful and blessed companionship of Christian marriage ; a beautiful inseparable twin-star in the heaven of our Christian story.

PART IV.

THE WOMEN OF THE EARLY CHURCH.

We come now to another stage of our Christian sacred story. Not to another level of the *life* of the Church, but to another level of her *history*.

There has been no change in the Church since the great day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came to abide within her, changing timid men into heroes, inspiring each for his or her office and work, moulding and enkindling men and women into the likeness of the Son of man. There is no barrier between to-day and Pentecost. But the Sacred Book is closed, and we pass from a history divinely selected and guided, to the history of the same life written in an imperfect, ordinary way.

The history of the Christian Church, we must remember, is a history of conflict, not at the beginning only, but always. Christian baptism is always the enlisting in an army. It is the ceaseless conflict of light with darkness, of love with selfishness, of purity with impurity. And always

the true weapons of her warfare, the only weapons with which she has ever made any true conquests, are the same. Like her Divine Lord, she overcomes evil with good, in the heart, in the home, in the world.

But the scene of this conflict is always changing, and also the outward aspect of the combatants.

At the time when the Christian Church began, throughout the most civilized part of the world, in Asia and Europe, a troop of gods and goddesses were worshipped, and had been worshipped for centuries. In every city and village they had temples and altars. Nothing more beautiful has ever been seen in the world than these temples and the images of the gods within and around them. Their ruins are the treasures of art to this day.

There was the god of heaven, the Thunderer, king of gods and men; the Sun god, glorious in eternal youth, who was also the god of Music and Song, inspiring poets; there was the maiden Moon goddess, with silver bow and arrows; there were the goddess of Beauty, able to give all earthly delights and to move hearts to each other, and the goddess of Wisdom, severe and strong, with her shield and spear.

And there were nymphs in every forest, and sea-gods and lovely sea-maidens floating in pearly chariots on the waves.

Every pleasure, good or evil, and every peril, had its especial divine potentate, who could bestow or avert it. These gods and goddesses were not

so much unselfishly adored as good and just beings, as selfishly feared and propitiated for what they could give or withhold.

But their temples were frequented daily by troops of worshippers. Garlands of fresh flowers were laid on their altars; oxen and kids and lambs were sacrificed to them. There were numbers of priests and priestesses who lived in their service and lived by it.

They had festivals in their honour, celebrated by feasts at great public tables, by races and wrestling matches, and mock battles in the great amphitheatres, and too often by wild and licentious dances and revels.

The more educated men had learned for the most part to disbelieve in these gods, and to despise their religion as vain and unreasonable. But they dared not *seem* to do so. For the common people feared them, and the priests were jealous of any disregard of their sacred rites. And moreover these wise men, if they displaced the ancient gods, had nothing else which *they knew certainly to be true to give men in exchange*. They could destroy what was false, and give a "perhaps" of a better hope. But for mere destruction and a "perhaps" who would encounter peril and hatred?

But the Christians, who believed that these gods were either mere symbols, or dreams (that is, "nothing at all"), or else evil demons conquered by Christ, had *something infinitely good to give men in exchange*—a living God, an immortal hope, a holy

forgiving Father, an atoning Redeemer, a new-creating Spirit able to renew the very soul, whose presence made all life a blessed service, and death but entering into fuller life with Him.

And therefore, having this good news and this good gift to give, they dared to tell every one that these capricious, revengeful, impure gods and goddesses were *not* the rulers of the world. Indeed, they dared not withhold the truth which was so clear and so precious to them.

For more than a thousand years, not a worshipper has been left to those ancient Greek and Roman and Eastern gods. Their names only live as in a kind of fairy tale, because of the beautiful poetry in which they were sung; their images as lovely relics of a vanished dream; their temples as fair ruins.

But when these first Christians ventured to defy them, the whole world worshipped them; and every word against them was uttered at peril of life.

The whole world worshipped them except the Jews, who hated the Christians even more than the worshippers of these gods did, as heretics and traitors to them, to their fathers' faith, because most of the earliest Christian teachers were Jews.

It was in the whirlwind between these two storms of fear and hatred that the Christian Church was cradled.

How, then, was it that a few men and women, mostly, by their own account and by that of their enemies, poor and of low rank, succeeded in over-

turning the religions of the world? Chiefly as the little soft seed bursts the hard strong shell, as the healthy, wholesome plant displaces the weeds; simply by growing.

The early Christians were not thinking so much of overturning the false gods, as of living and spreading the new divine life. At all events, these were the weapons of the women of the Church, of whom we are now especially speaking. Men might be called to a more direct assault.

Christian women made their coats and garments for the needy, they nursed the sick, they helped the poor, they opened their homes to strangers, they visited those who were in prison. In their own homes they were patient and tender, and pure and forgiving, and brave and industrious beyond others; and when men saw it, and wondered, and asked, "Whence comes this new life?" the Christians said, "We are but poor copies of Him whom we adore. If you could see Him whom by faith we see, you would learn our secret." And often men did so look, until they also believed in Him and began also to grow like Him, and cared no more for the old false gods.

But, especially in those early days, it often happened that men were won to Christ by the way His disciples died for Him, when the rage of the worshippers of the old gods was kindled against them and they were persecuted to the death.

But perhaps you may think, why should these Christians be thus hated and slain, if their faith

ly made them more kind and serviceable to
every one?

We see in the stories of the early martyrdoms
at it was usually fear which excited the mul-
titudes against the Christians.

There was a pestilence or an earthquake, a
mine or an inundation, or a menace of war; and
blind terror the people rushed to the temples,
the gods and goddesses of the earth, or of the
skins and the winds, or of war, and cried out in a
panic, what had they done to make the gods angry?

And, in reply, the priests or others would
hispere, in the name of the gods—

“ It is the Christians. They are taking away
our worshippers. They are emptying our temples.
our altars are forsaken; our sacrifices fail; we
are forgotten for this new name. It is the
Christians who have brought on you the famine,
the pestilence, the enemy.”

And then the multitude, in an agony of terror,
would rush to the magistrates, and say—

“ Great are the gods of our fathers! Let all the
world worship them! Death to the Christians!
The Christians to the lions, to the cross!”

And as the multitudes feared the angry gods, the
magistrates feared the angry people, and so the
persecution began.

Among the numbers of these early martyr
stories, I will tell you two; the story of Blandina
of Lyons, and the story of Perpetua and Felicitas
of Africa.

THE STORY OF BLANDINA.

THERE was in very early times, scarcely a hundred years after our Lord Jesus had risen from the dead and ascended out of sight, in the cities of Lyons and Vienne, in the land now called France, a little community of Christians.

The city of Lyons was built on a hill, above a beautiful, broad river, which sweeps round the hill, flowing very swiftly.

On the top of this hill were temples of the ancient gods and goddesses; on the sides were palaces of the rich natives and of the foreign governors who came from Rome. In this city, as in all Roman cities, there was a great amphitheatre, with terraced rows of stone seats, surrounding a large, flat, empty central place, where were fought battles, not mock but terribly real, to amuse the people, between armed prisoners and wild beasts, lions, tigers, and fierce bulls. For although those ancient people were so skilful and clever, and could build wonderful temples, bridges, and palaces, they had a horrible pleasure in the excitement of these cruel games, which were held in honour of their gods.

Among these palaces and temples there was a little band of men and women who had learned to love and serve Christ, and to hate all cruelty and

purity. Many of them had originally come in Asia, and spoke and wrote Greek, the language of their part of Asia; some were of the great ruling Roman race; some were natives of the country.

It was little more than a hundred years after the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. Some of these Christians had spoken to old men who had known John the beloved, the disciple who stood by the cross, and took the blessed mother Mary to his own home. For St. John had passed his last days in that part of Asia from which these Christians came.

There were nobles and slaves, rich and poor, among them.

Our story is chiefly of a slave.

In one of the houses of that city lived a family in which the mistress and one young slave-girl were Christians.

I cannot tell you anything about the rest of the household. But the fires of persecution have brought these two into the light for ever.

Back through the fogs and darkness of seventeen hundred years, we look on those figures, illuminated in the fierce fire of trial, and see them as early as if it had all happened yesterday.

But it is curious that the name of only one of the two is preserved, and that not of the mistress but of the slave. Indeed, we should scarcely have heard of the mistress, but for her care and love for Blandina the slave.

Blandina was young and small in person, insignificant, even contemptible-looking, it is said.

If you had seen her in the every-day life of the home, you would only have seen a gentle little slave-maiden quietly going through her work; saying little, professing little, only doing the duty of the moment, whatever it was, whatever it cost. Her own mistress had no idea of the fire of love and the rock of courage in that little frame.

Mistress and slave, together they went, before dawn, especially on the first day of the week, to sing the hymn to Christ which we sing now, and to share in the sacred Eucharistic Feast which He instituted, and at which He has promised always to be present with us, though unseen. They never went to the temples of the gods with garlands and sacrifices. They had long lived thus without being molested. But one day there began to arise in the city an angry feeling against the Christians.

There were reports that some fierce nations of wild, warlike people in the North were preparing to march on the cities of that land, to plunder and murder and destroy.

And there began to be a terrified murmur that the temples were being deserted, and that the gods were angry, and were sending those fierce barbarians against them in punishment.

Then people looked suspiciously around to see who these Christians were, and what were their deeds.

They were known by their determined absence

om the temples of the ancient gods, and from all
otous feastings and cruel games, by their meeting
gether to pray and sing hymns, by their love and
delity to each other.

No crime, or disloyalty, or breach of the laws
ould be alleged against them.

But the city and the world they lived in was
teeped in vice and corruption, and wild suspicions
nd rumours sprang up against them, accusing
hem of secret crimes.

Those who do evil themselves are always ready
o believe it of others. And the Christians began
o be attacked in the streets by the lowest of the
people. Curses were muttered against them, stones
vere thrown at them, little knots of excited people
ould wait for them as they went from house to
house, until by degrees the mutterings grew into
ierce howls of rage. They were struck with sticks
nd hunted through the streets like wild beasts ;
heir houses were broken into and plundered ; and
as it was found that no one defended them, and
they did not retaliate, the attack became more
systematic. Their enemies influenced each other by
cruel words and acts. The public baths and the
markets were closed against them ; they were
reated as criminals and outcasts, and at length
they were violently dragged before the magistrates.

The laws of the great Roman empire which
then ruled the world were against them for refusing
to sacrifice to the gods.

And the governor who then ruled in this city

was only too ready to humour the rage of the populace.

The Christians were thrown into prison, and many of them were so roughly handled by the soldiers and the mob on their way to and from the prisons, that they all but died of the ill-usage. Pothinus, a venerable old man of ninety, bishop of the Church, bore noble witness with his feeble voice before the judges.

“Who is the God of the Christians?” they asked.

“If you are worthy,” he replied, “you shall know.”

Beaten with iron rods, and dragged and driven through the streets, two more days in the prison finished his failing life, before his sentence could be pronounced.

The object of the enemies of the Christians was twofold—to make them confess they had committed crimes, and to make them deny Christ.

To obtain these ends, it was not enough to put them to death. They must be tortured to make them condemn themselves, or retract.

Some few failed in courage, and would at the moment say anything to be taken off the rack which was dislocating their limbs, or withdrawn from the fire which was scorching them.

Blandina and her mistress were among the first seized. And the chief anxiety of the lady, amidst her own sufferings, was lest the poor young slave-girl, small and delicate as her frame was, should yield to the torture and fall away from the faith.

On the judgment-seat were the governor and magistrates distrusting the Christians, and determined to make them confess crimes they had never committed, and to deny Christ.

Around were the enraged and superstitious mob, clamouring for every severity.

In a cleared space between these were the accused, and the executioners who tortured them.

But dispersed among the angry crowd, or in quiet corners, were Christians not yet seized, never failing at any risk to support their suffering brethren, to encourage them onward, and to strengthen them by sympathy, until their own time to confess might come.

One of these wrote a letter describing what he heard and saw. "Most violently did the collective ringleaders of the mob, the governor, and the soldiers rage against Blandina, in whom Christ made manifest that the things that appear mean and deformed and contemptible among men are most esteemed by God. She cherished that love to Him which evinces itself by fortitude, and does not boast of mere profession. For whilst we were all trembling, and her earthly mistress, who was herself one of the contending martyrs, was apprehensive lest, through the weakness of the flesh, she should not be able to make a bold confession, Blandina was filled with such power that her ingenious tormentors, who relieved and succeeded each other from morning till night, confessed that they were overcome and had nothing more that they could inflict on her.

“Only amazed that she still continued to breathe, after her whole body was torn asunder and pierced, they gave their testimony that one single kind of the torture inflicted was of itself sufficient to destroy life.

“But this blessed saint, as a noble wrestler, in the midst of her confession itself renewed her strength; and to repeat, ‘*I am a Christian; no wickedness is carried on by us,*’ was to her rest, refreshment, and relief from pain.

“Refreshed and strengthened,” he says, “she and other sufferers were by the celestial fountain of living water that flows from the heart of Christ. The body indeed was one continued wound, mangled and shrivelled. But Christ suffering in them exhibited wonders, defeated the adversary, thus vividly representing to all that there is nothing terrific where the love of the Father is, nothing hurtful where the glory of Christ prevails.”

From the torture, they were carried back to the prison, where they were left, fettered, in noisome, airless dungeons, and often died of suffocation.

But it is not for the record of cruel inflictions and brave endurance of pain I tell you this harrowing story.

Unconquerable determination has been shown for evil as for good causes.

It was not only their unconquerable patience, it was their unconquerable love and humility which shows to us that it was the Christ who loved the world, and sought and ever seeks the lost, who con-

quered in these His disciples. When they came back faint and in anguish to the prison, their brethren met them with every homage and honour they could render, giving them the name which is the royal title of nobility in our Christian Church —“The noble army of martyrs.” They hailed the sufferers as “martyrs,” that is, witnesses—people who bear witness, by their Christ-like life and death, that Christ exists, that He died and lives, and abides with His Church for ever.

But the sufferers seriously reproved their brethren for rendering them this homage. “Christ is the true and faithful martyr,” they said; “first-begotten from the dead, Prince of life. They also are martyrs whom Christ has thought worthy, who have sealed their confession by death. But we are only ordinary and mean confessors.”

And with many tears they entreated the brethren to pray they might be faithful unto death.

They uttered no revengeful, bitter word against their tormentors, but forgave them and prayed for them.

And to the wretched ones whose courage had failed under the torture, they showed the compassion of tender mothers to a feeble child, comforting and encouraging them, so that many of the fallen took heart and rose again, and confessed before the tribunal that they were Christians, and endured unto death.

Day after day Blandina was brought out to the tribunal, to suffer herself, and to see the sufferings

of others, and night by night she was led back to the suffocating prison.

At last there was proclaimed a great show and festival in the amphitheatre. Instead of the wild beasts, with whose combats the people were wont to amuse themselves, the Christians were to be led forth, to die in agony in sight of all the city.

The first day Blandina was suspended on a stake in the midst of the amphitheatre, and the hungry lions and tigers driven in to feed on her.

But the wild creatures would not touch the victim; and the brethren, seeing her suspended there, and hearing the prayers with which she pleaded for them all, beheld in her a likeness of the Lord who suffered on the cross for us, and were sustained as by the sight of Him, thinking of the sudden joy in the presence of the Saviour and the Eternal Father so soon to be theirs.

The numbers of the sufferers diminished, as one by one they succumbed to the torture and died; and at last the day came when there were but two led forth to die—Blandina, and a boy of fifteen, named Ponticus.

Fire, the wild beasts, scourging, and piercing were tried again to make them deny their Lord; but the gazing crowds could see the heroic girl not only heroically enduring all herself, but encouraging and confirming her young fellow-sufferer to the end.

The boy Ponticus died first.

And then more than half of the sufferings of the brave, tender heart of the woman were over.

After that, when she was left to suffer alone, a spectator writes, "As a noble mother that had animated her children and sent them as visitors to the great king, with joy and exultation at their victory and her own hope, she went forth for the last time, as if she were invited to a marriage-feast, and not to be cast, as she was, in a net, to be tossed by wild beasts."

It is said that her joy in communion with God raised her above feeling these latest sufferings. Pierced, at last, by the final death-stroke, she, the last sufferer, lay dead on the arena, unconquerable, beyond suffering for ever.

It was in this way that the foundations of the Christian Church were laid; for not the old false gods only, but slavery, cruelty, impurity, and all evil, received another death-blow, however long the death-struggle may last, in such victories as the death of this slave-girl Blandina of Lyons.

PERPETUA AND FELICITAS.

OUR next story is also of a noble lady and a slave, but in this the chief interest is centred in the noble matron.

They were both young. The lady, named Vivia Perpetua, was of Roman birth; but they lived in Africa, on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea.

They were arrested and thrown into prison for refusing to sacrifice to the gods of Rome.

Perpetua's own mother was a Christian, but her father kept to the Roman gods. There was a strong affection between the father and his daughter. She was twenty-two years old, married to a man of rank; and she had an infant at her breast.

Her young brother was arrested with her.

When she was rudely dragged before the tribunal, her aged father, in his tender affection, persisted in his endeavours to make her recant—to “cast her down,” as she said, from the faith, and make her deny that she was a Christian.

But looking on an earthen pitcher which lay on the ground, she said quietly—

“My father, can I call this vessel anything but what it is, a pitcher?”

“Certainly not,” he replied. For in Rome truth

was esteemed a duty; while to the true Christian it is a necessity.

"Nor can I," she said, "call myself by any other name than that of Christian."

A bitter resentment against her obstinacy flashed in the old man's eyes, and he harassed her sadly with his words, and then went dejected away.

Her heart also was very sore to see him thus depart, and it was some days before she could temper her spirit to bear his absence, and give thanks to God. The sufferings in the crowded prison were hard to the delicately nurtured lady, but the partings were harder.

Perpetua and Felicitas, and Perpetua's brother and the other men with them, were all young, and had not yet received Christian baptism. In the prison they were baptized.

Perpetua wrote a brief story of the early days of their imprisonment, which we have still.

In this she says, "At my baptism, the Spirit prompted me to pray for nothing but patience;" and indeed her prayer was granted. "The waters of baptism," she wrote, "seemed to give endurance to my body."

After a few days of greater liberty and seclusion, they were cast into the common inner prison. "I was terrified," Perpetua writes, "for I had never before seen such total darkness. A miserable day! from the dreadful heat of the prisoners crowded together, and the insults of the soldiers. I was torn with anxiety for my infant. Two of our deacons,

however, by the payment of money, obtained our removal for some hours in the day to a more open part of the prison. There each of the captives could pursue his usual occupation; but I sat and suckled my infant, who was wasting away with hunger." In the midst of her anxiety she was able to comfort her mother, who was a Christian, and came to visit her; and she commended her babe to another brother, for seeing how they grieved for her, she began to pine away herself.

Her faith made her heart more tender as well as more courageous.

Daughter, woman of rank, mother, she dreaded the horror of the stifling air, and the darkness polluted by insulting words. She suffered in the sufferings of her parents; she pined with her pining babe.

And yet she never shrank for an instant from confessing her Saviour.

And the joy He gave her overflowed the terror and the suffering. Death in her was swallowed up of life. She recovered strength. The clergy came, and they partook of the Holy Eucharist in prison. "And I was happier there," she said, "than I could have been in a palace."

Lovely dreams came to her at night. She saw a ladder of gold, with a great dragon at its foot. But, as they went up, the dragon couched like a tame dog below; and at the top was a fair, wide garden. There sat Christ the Good Shepherd amongst His sheep, and He gave to her lips

heavenly food, and she took it with folded hands, and she heard the “Amen” of the saints, and awoke with the music in her heart, and the sweet taste of the heavenly food.

And when she told this dream to her brother, they knew that the dream meant that there was no more hope for them in this world.

Once more her aged father, hearing that the last trial was near, came to her in the prison. All the anger had gone from his poor worn face. Wasted with grief and anxiety, he threw himself at her feet, fondly kissing her hands. Weeping sore, he called her not daughter but *domina*—lady, entreating instead of commanding. “Have compassion,” he said, “on my grey hairs; have compassion on thy father. I have brought thee up to this thy bloom of years; I have loved thee beyond all thy brothers. Do not expose me to this dishonour. Look on thy mother, thy brother, thy mother’s sister, thy child, who cannot live without thee. Do not ruin us all. For if thou persistest none of us will be able to bear ourselves as free citizens more.”

Dearly she loved, bitterly she grieved for him. For to him alone, of all her family, not being a Christian, her martyrdom could bring nothing but shame and anguish, and no compensating joy. She tried to console him by saying—

“What will happen at the tribunal will be what God wills. For we stand not in our own strength, but in the strength of God.”

But he went away sorrowing.

Once more, for the last time, she stood at the tribunal before the judges.

Her father sought to move her by coming forward with her infant in his arms ; and the judges sought to overcome her by what, knowing her dutiful filial love, they felt would shake her most. They threw the old man down and beat him with rods. It was harder to her than being beaten herself, but she could not, even for this, lie, or be a traitor to the Lord who had redeemed the world.

“Spare the grey hairs of your father,” they cried. “Spare your babe. Offer sacrifice to the gods.”

But she answered, “That I cannot do.”

“Art thou a Christian ?” demanded the judge again.

“I am a Christian,” she said.

Then sentence was passed on them all.

They were condemned to be torn by wild beasts in the arena at the public games.

And they went back to the prison rejoicing they had been strengthened to confess their God.

Soon afterwards Felicitas the slave, who was Perpetua’s fellow-sufferer, gave birth to a child in the prison.

As she moaned in her anguish, those around said, “If thou sufferest thus now, how wilt thou bear to be thrown to the savage beasts ? Thou didst not consider this when thou didst refuse to sacrifice.”

But the young mother replied—

“What I now suffer, I suffer myself; but then there will be another who will suffer for me, because I shall suffer for His sake.”

Old memories of her childhood came back to Perpetua, as they stood thus waiting on the threshold of the better life; and she dreamed of a little brother who had died when seven years old; and in her dream the child seemed athirst, and she helped him to reach a fountain of living water.

The hearts of the gaolers were softened by the gentle patience of their captives. They suffered other Christians to come to the prison and comfort them.

They also suffered the poor old father to come again to visit Perpetua. In his misery he threw himself on the ground, entreating her to retract, plucking out his own grey hairs, praying that he might die, tearing her heart with his anguish.

At last the day of the great festival came, and the five Christians were led forth to be thrown to the wild beasts at the public games.

These games were instituted in honour of the ancient gods, and there was a custom in that country of robing those who were condemned to beasts in the priestly garments, in robes of purple, and garlanding their brows with flowers.

But against this the free Christian spirit of the martyrs protested.

“We have come here of our own will,” they said, “that our liberty may not be taken from us.

We are giving up our lives that we may not be compelled to such evil rites as these."

The justice of their demand touched the natural justice in the hearts of their persecutors. This insult was spared, and they were suffered to enter the empty space of combat, in sight of the thousands of spectators seated row above row around it, in their own simple every-day clothes, Perpetua the while singing hymns of praise.

A little while they stood there, and then the gratings of the hungry wild beasts' dens were raised, and they rushed in, seeking their victims. The men were exposed to the leopards and bears. The women were hung up in a net to be tossed by a fierce cow.

They were supported by a wonderful inward joy.

When afterwards they lay torn and wounded in the arena, Perpetua calmly drew her rent robe over her, and clasped up her long loosened tresses ; because the Christians deemed it became not a martyr bearing witness for the King of kings, as at a festival, and going so soon to be crowned of Him, to suffer with dishevelled locks, as at a funeral.

Then she crept to where her fellow-sufferer Felicitas lay, wounded and dying, and raised her up tenderly in her arms, the lady only privileged above the slave in being thus permitted to serve and succour to the last.

Felicitas had said in the prison—

"In the arena I shall not suffer alone." Their

Saviour, they knew, would sustain them. And most wonderfully He did.

For Perpetua herself, all pain seemed lost in spiritual joy. For, after being tossed, she asked "when she was to be given to the wild beasts," as if all were yet to come. She could scarcely be made to believe it was over.

With her dying breath she tenderly encouraged her young brother to be steadfast to the end.

And then, the gladiator who was to give her the death-stroke having twice failed in his aim, she gently guided his sword, and so, like Stephen, the first Christian, "fell asleep," and awoke to the life which shall never fade, in the presence of Christ.

MONICA, MOTHER OF ST. AUGUSTINE.

THE next story I will tell you is of the mother of a great and good man.

A.D. On the same African coast where Perpetua circa 332. and Félicitas died, lived, about a hundred years afterwards, one of the very greatest of our Christian teachers, named Augustine. He wandered a long way from the true and blessed life, but all the time of his wanderings his mother's prayers were following him; and in his inmost heart the memory of her holy life and her love to God were never effaced, until at last he rose from his falls, and came back to God and to her, and has left us this story of her life.

Monica, the mother of Augustine, was Born 332. born of Christian parents at Tagasta, in Numidia. She was early trained as a Christian, but not so much by her parents as by a poor, decrepit old maid-servant, who had carried Monica's father in her arms in his infancy, and now in her old age served his little daughters.

This faithful nurse used to keep the children from greediness and self-indulgence, not letting them take food or even water between their meals. "You drink water now," said she; "but when you are married and mistresses of the cellar, you might

take wine." And so with holy severity and discretion she trained them to self-control and patience, preserving their health both of body and spirit.

And all her life Monica gratefully remembered this wise, kind restraint, and told her son of it; and so the poor, faithful old servant has her niche of honour in our Christian history.

Another servant in Monica's household is also to be remembered.

Monica used to be sent as a young girl to bring wine from the cellar, holding the flagon under the hogshead. Beginning from childish fun, she got into the habit of sipping the wine, and these sips gradually became larger, until she would take a small cupful.

So it went on, until one day a young maid-servant, who happened to go with her to the cellar, quarrelled with her little mistress about something else, and, in revenge, angrily called her "wine-bibber."

Instead of answering bitterly, Monica had the rare sweetness and wisdom to be ready to learn even from an unkind rebuke. In the main, her will was set to do right, and she welcomed the light, even in an hostile hand. She took the reproof home, at once condemned herself, and forsook her fault.

She was married early, and had three children, two sons and a daughter. In her married life she had many trials from her husband, who did not

lead a good life, and was of a hasty, violent temper.

His irritable disposition was well known. Many matrons of Monica's acquaintance would speak against their husbands, complaining of their harshness; but she would blame their disloyal speech. For never would she return his rough words, nor complain of him to others, but gently she would wait until the angry fit had passed, and then try to explain what had vexed him, so that they never had any difference for one day. He was won by her sweetness and gentleness to be gentle to her, and to love and honour her dearly, and at last was brought to a pure and Christian life, and dwelt in faith and peace.

Her mother-in-law also, who was at first incensed against her by unkind whisperings of wicked servants, she so overcame by her observance and meekness, that she of her own accord discovered to her son the meddling tongues whereby the peace between her and her daughter-in-law had been disturbed; and they lived together ever after with a remarkable sweetness of mutual kindness.

She was also a peacemaker wherever she could be, hearing the most bitter things said in angry quarrels by one against another, and never repeating them, but quietly disclosing whatever could tend to reconciliation. And so she healed much strife.

Dutiful daughter, loving and forbearing wife, wise and faithful friend, loyally remembering every kindness ever done her, and delighting to do kind-

ness to all, all who knew her saw in these blessed fruits of her life the presence of the holy and loving Spirit in her heart.

Towards the end of his life her patience and gentleness were rewarded, and she had the joy of winning her husband to God and goodness.

But most of all she is remembered among us for her devoted, motherly love to her son, the great Augustine, "travailing as often in birth of her children," he wrote, "as she saw them swerving from God."

Augustine, the most richly gifted of her children, caused her the deepest sorrow.

It seems possible that at the beginning she may have erred in dissuading him from the safeguard of an early marriage, desiring too ambitiously for him leisure to take a high place in the world. If this was so, she suffered most bitterly for her mistake. Further and further he wandered from truth and goodness, led astray in reason and heart and life; by false belief fortified in evil practice, through sin plunging deeper into error, until, dear as he was to her, she grew to dread his presence at table on account of the evil words he spoke against God and righteousness.

Yet never did her patient gentleness or her welcoming love fail him, so that in his darkest times he retained his confidence in her, and told her of his falls, as afterwards of his restoration.

Night and day she prayed for him, "weeping more for the death of his soul in that darkness

than many mothers weep for the bodily death of their children."

One night a dream came to comfort her. "A radiant, heavenly being," her son writes, "appeared to her and asked why she wept; and she, weeping in her dream, said it was for me. Whereupon he bade her rest contented, for where she stood I should stand also. And, looking again, she saw me, in her dream, stand close beside her on the right path."

When she told this dream to her son he did not seem to heed, and made objections; but the promise of the dream, and the tender wisdom with which she met his objections, never faded from his memory.

Nine long anxious years still passed before her dream was fulfilled; but the hope strengthened her to pray on without ceasing, with many tears, for him, night and day, never despairing, though he seemed still going further and further from her into the darkness.

One day she went to a certain wise bishop learned in our Sacred Books, and also learned in the knowledge of the human heart, and entreated him to speak to her son, and to teach him.

But he, wisely, as it afterwards proved, declined at that time to interfere, saying Augustine was not yet ready to hear. He knew that every human soul must fight its own battles, and that no bud can be opened into a true flower by rending, but only by growing. "Let him alone a while," he said;

"only pray for him to God. He will of himself, by reading, find out his error."

But she, bewailing every precious lost year of her son's life, and the beautiful gifts wasted, and even worse, wasting and ruining others, still urged the bishop with tearful entreaties, until he, half rebuking, but more encouraging, answered—

"Go thy ways, and God bless thee, for it is not possible that the son of these tears should perish." Which answer she took, as afterwards often she told Augustine, as if it had sounded from heaven.

Still year after year passed on, the son wandering further from all the mother believed good and true; the mother's heart's blood, as he said afterwards, poured out through her tears night and day, as a sacrifice to God for him.

At length he resolved to leave her altogether and cross the seas to Rome, to live entirely among those who were, she felt, his worst enemies.

She followed him to the shore, pleading with him not to leave her thus; but he, disregarding her tears, persuaded her by a false promise to spend the night in an oratory, while he saw a friend off in the ship.

In the morning, when she sought the shore again, the ship was gone, and in it her son. frantic with sorrow, alone on the deserted shore, she moaned and wept to God, mourning for the loss of her son, but more for his heartless treachery to her, and most of all for the dangers into which he had plunged.

Years afterwards, when she was dead, bitter memories of his unkindness came back to Augustine. "I lied to my mother," he said, "and such a mother!"

But God, as he said, was indeed hearing the main point of her desires, though regarding not what she then asked.

She had asked that he might be led into truth and goodness, and he was plunging ever deeper into darkness. She had asked that God would not suffer him to sail, and the wind blew and swelled the sails of the ship he was in, and it was soon out of sight.

"She loved my being with her," he said afterwards, "as mothers do, but much more than many, and she knew not how great joy Thou wert to work out for her out of my absence. After accursing my treachery and hard-heartedness, she betook herself again to intercede for me. She went to her wonted place, and I to Rome."

The way she had dreaded for him proved indeed the way to bring him back to God and to her.

There was still much weary way to tread.

In Rome, separated from her, he was stricken with dangerous illness. From this he recovered, but yet unchanged in thought and life. But still, through all, the mother's prayers went up night and day, growing in calm confidence, till slowly, through the conversion and the death of friends, through the moral failure of his heretical teachers, through the holy life of Christians, through reading the Sacred

Scriptures, but above all, as he thought, through his mother's prayers, and the undying memory of her goodness and her early teaching, Augustine was brought back to God, was baptized in the great church at Milan, and became one of the greatest Christian teachers the world ever had.

Monica had followed him to Europe. When his belief and his life had changed, he and other friends of his like-minded with him resolved to live in a community to worship God together, and to serve and help the poor and all who needed.

And Monica lived with them, administering the household affairs, taking care of them, her son writes, "as though she had been the mother of us all, serving us as if she had been child to us all."

They had at length all decided on going back to live together in Augustine's native land, Africa, and were recruiting from the fatigues of a long journey, at Ostia, on the Italian coast, preparing for the voyage.

But, unknown to them, Monica was to be summoned thence on a longer voyage, and to leave her son weeping on the shores of this world, as he had once left her weeping on the shores of Africa.

The mother and the son were standing alone together, leaning on a window which looked into a garden. There was a wonderful likeness and union of soul between them, and they were discoursing together very sweetly, as he remembered afterwards, of God and His truth, and the eternal world of life, where the holy ones dwell in His presence,

with words so intimate they seemed more like sighs than words,—were saying how incomparably beyond all earthly joy the sweetness of that other life must be, and soaring up even through the joy of that life to God Himself, when the mother said—

“ Son, for my own part I have no further delight in anything in this life. What I do here any longer I know not, now that my hopes in this world are fulfilled. One thing there was for which I desired to linger for a while in this life, that I might see thee a Catholic Christian before I died. My God hath done this for me more abundantly, making thee His servant. What do I here ? ”

And scarce five days after she fell into a fever, and in the fever into a swoon. They hastened round her ; but she soon became conscious again, and said, “ Where was I ? ” and looking fixedly at them as they stood by her, amazed with grief.

“ Here,” said she, “ shall you bury your mother.”

Augustine held his peace, and kept back his tears, understanding her inmost soul ; but his brother spake something, wishing for her, as the happier lot, that she might die, not in this strange place, but in her own land.

For they knew she had ever been very careful and anxious as to her place of burial, which she had provided and prepared for herself, to be laid beside the body of her husband.

But checking him with a wistful look in her eyes, she looked at Augustine and said, “ Behold what he saith ! ”

And soon afterwards she added, "Lay this body anywhere; let not the care for that in any way disquiet you: this only I request, that you would remember me at the Lord's altar, wherever you be."

And then her illness increased and she could say no more.

But afterwards Augustine heard that once, when he was absent, and one of his friends had asked her "whether she were not afraid to leave her body so far from her own city?" she had replied—

"Nothing is far from God; nor is it to be feared lest, at the end of the world, He should not recognize whence He is to raise me up."

And soon afterwards, on the ninth day of her illness, "in the fifty-sixth year of her age," her son writes, "and the three and thirtieth of mine, was that religious and holy soul freed from the body."

An agony of weeping rose around that unconscious form. But soon it was stilled, as unfit for the departure of such a spirit. And they buried her reverently, in full hope, without tears.

But deep in Augustine's heart was "the pain of that wound, wrought through the sudden wrench of that most sweet and dear habit of living together."

He rejoiced indeed in remembering how in her last illness, mingling her endearments with his acts of care, she had called him "dutiful," and said with great tenderness that "she had never heard any hard or reproachful sound uttered by my mouth against her."

But yet he moaned in his heart, “ O my God, who madest us, what comparison is there between the honour I paid to her and her slavery for me ? Being forsaken of so great comfort in her, my soul was wounded, and my very life rent asunder as it were, which of hers and mine together had been made but one.”

Deep down in his heart he pressed and hid his grief, but the tears would flow in silence in secret before God.

Little indeed did it matter to Monica whether her body was embalmed with precious spices, or buried in a costly monument, or laid to rest in her own land—she whose memory is embalmed for ever in her son’s immortal words, whose costly monument is his life, for whom the whole imperishable Christian Church is as a home wherein her name is evermore a tender, sacred household word.

PART V.

THE CHRISTIAN WOMEN OF ROME IN THE FOURTH CENTURY.

THE Christian Church was now to enter on a new campaign of her ceaseless warfare, a campaign which was to last for centuries.

The City of God had been founded in the midst of the decaying empire of the city of Rome, so that when the empire and the city of Rome fell, the Church, the city of God, still stood, fair and imperishable. The winds and the floods of the Northern invasion blew and beat upon that house ; but it fell not, for it was founded on the Rock. And within that sacred house were preserved for the world not only the sacred Creeds of the Christian faith, but also the precious treasures of the old Roman civilization, language, and literature, and law, so that the continuity is not broken in Christendom between the ancient world and the modern.

Nevertheless the deluge was mighty. Flood after flood of these strong, fierce Northern people came

sweeping down over the ancient civilization, and many a time the hearts of the bravest quailed for a time; and they said, "All is over; the end is come; the world is grown old." Yet they never gave up the conflict. And when the tide retreated, it was often found that what it had swept away was merely some crumbling outbuilding which deformed the whole edifice, and the house itself stood firm.

For the Sacred House is garrisoned with an immortal Presence. The Son of God never forsakes His Temple; the Spirit of life and love abides continually within the Church, and is for ever renewing the face of the earth with fresh forms of life. The Spirit of God is really, for ever, in spite of our failures and sins, creating and inspiring in the hearts of good men and women the likeness of the Son of God who delighted to do His will, of the Son of man who gave His life for men.

During these next centuries the work of the Christian Church was to subdue and discipline and inspire these new nations from the North, from whose stock the great nations of modern Christendom have sprung.

The work of the Church among them, as always and everywhere, was twofold.

The aim of her warfare being to overcome evil with good, there are always two sides to her work.

She has to destroy the destroying elements of falsehood and sin. She has also to discover and liberate and consecrate all the elements of truth

and goodness in the systems she conquers, and to develop them by the fulness of the divine life.

Among many of the Northern nations there had existed, before Christianity, a true reverence for womanhood and for purity of life.

These noble elements, amongst others, the Church recognized and upheld in contrast with the enervating licentiousness of later Rome.

Much of the spread of the Christian religion among the Northern tribes was due to the influence of Christian women.

As usual with good women, these blessed ones had no ambition to be seen and talked of, and therefore their histories exist only in fragments; but of such bright glimpses of them as we have, I will endeavour to reflect some for you.

The history of the Christian Church is a history of one long and ceaseless conflict. "Conquering and to conquer" is the motto inscribed on her banners.

Her victories are not for overthrow, but for conquest.

The conquests of the Cross are not over the sinner, but over the sin.

The battle is continually renewed, in continually varied forms, but the same in its essence; because her enemies are the evil in the heart of man, unmercifulness, impurity, selfishness.

Two centuries had passed since Blandina, Perpetua, and Felicitas were cast in the theatre to the wild beasts.

Christianity had become the prevailing religion of the lands where they had died for professing it. The ancient gods and goddesses were fast fading into dreams.

The Roman empire, which had persecuted the Christians, was fast decaying.

The great evils of the time in Rome were selfish luxury and licentiousness.

To give you a picture of the sins of the city of Rome, at this time, would soil any pages.

The poor citizens of the magnificent imperial city disdained to work, and were fed by doles from the State, and passed their time in utter idleness, between the public games and public baths provided for them by the emperors. The work was done by wretched multitudes of captive slaves.

Luxury and idleness were wasting the strength of the rich.

The men occupied themselves with magnificent feastings and exciting amusements, and scorned to fight or to study.

The women, forgetting their homes and all true womanly modesty, encouraged the luxury and the cruel amusements of the men.

And over all this rioting and moral ruin fell from time to time the terrible shadow from the North. Beyond the mountains were the hundreds of thousands of the barbarous nations, strong and hardy and brave, who had heard of this ancient city of Rome as a golden treasury, and were possessed by a longing to conquer and plunder it.

The enervated Romans sometimes roused themselves to fight against them, and, having better weapons, succeeded for the time in beating them back.

No one had fire-arms then, so that all combatants were more equal; but the discipline of their wise and brave forefathers, and the superiority of their weapons, still gave these civilized Romans an advantage.

But, as time went on, rather than fight themselves, the Romans paid the wild Northern people to fight against each other.

And so, slowly but surely, these dreaded hordes were drawing ever closer and closer to the luxurious and wicked city. And also, slowly but surely, they were always growing more disciplined in war, acquiring better weapons, and becoming more equal in skill to their enemies.

So that all this Roman idleness and luxury became more and more like reckless feasting in a besieged and doomed city.

At the worst time of this decline, about the year of our Lord 380, in the midst of all this luxury, and laziness, and dissoluteness, gradually gathered on one of the seven hills of the city of Rome, called the Aventine, a little company of noble women, like a green wholesome island, with fresh fountains and sweet, pure air, amidst the stagnant morass of corruption and decay.

Their place of meeting was the palace of a great Roman lady named Marcella.

She had been early widowed, and had inherited large property both from her father and from her husband.

She firmly refused to marry again, and lived simply in her palace, spending her wealth in helping the needy and in promoting all kinds of good works.

As the years went on, many other noble women gathered around her: some young maidens, some early widowed like Marcella herself, some wearied and worn with the sorrows of long life, ready to devote themselves to the service of God in praise and prayer, and study of the Sacred Scriptures, and by the succouring of all who needed help. For the alabaster boxes of precious ointment which once were poured on the feet of our Lord on earth have since, as you know, been as truly poured on His feet by being sold for much and given to the poor, whom He has left always with us.

This Aventine community did not live in one house, but they usually laid aside the extravagant, gorgeous dress then in fashion, and wore dark woollen garments and veils, binding their brows with a golden fillet.

Thus they could recognize each other, and the people of the licentious city knew and respected them, and they often met in Marcella's house and in the churches.

There was a celebrated clergyman and teacher at that time in Rome named Jerome, a man of an austere life, who by his fervent eloquence had done much to save these ladies out of the corrupt society

around them. He guided them in their study of the Sacred Scriptures, himself aiding their thoughts and prayers, and encouraging them in every good work. They were wont to combine and consult how best to serve and succour the sad and evil world around them.

Among other things they spent large sums in liberating captives and slaves, and built hospitals for the sick, and inns for weary travellers and pilgrims, and homes for fatherless and motherless children.

And one of them, a beautiful young matron called Fabiola, having been reckless and self-willed in her youth, repented and confessed her misdoings, and devoted not only her substance but herself to the service of the sick and poor, founding an hospital, in which she tended those suffering from the most loathsome diseases with her own hands.

I cannot enter into details of the lives of these ladies. But I wish you to see how in them the Christian Church rose in battle, according to the law of her life, against the peculiar evils of the time, raising, in the midst of this idle and selfish and licentious world, a band of noble women who spent their lives from morning to night in earnest prayer and praise and intercession, and in works of unwearied and self-denying beneficence.

Around this faithful band on the Aventine hill, was a city plunged in luxury and idleness and wild indulgence, and cruel indifference to the sufferings

of others ; around the city was a world disorganized and dissolving ; outside this Roman world a new barbarian world, brave, strong and savage, and eagerly watching the moment to rush in and plunder, to possess, or to destroy. Everywhere selfishness, death, dissolution, and despair.

And on this Aventine hill, life and freshness and hope ; rich and noble women leading a life simple and austere as that of the simplest virtuous peasants ; searching out every kind of human need and wretchedness and sin to succour and to save.

It was out of the mire of corruption of this decaying Rome that the first hospital arose, where the destitute sick were nursed freely and tenderly by the hands of pure and high-born women, as in a wealthy home.

Ere long (A.D. 410) the dreaded Northern tribes swept in a fierce flood on the devoted city, and all her riotous feasting ended in a long, bitter wail of misery and torture and death.

But out of that whirlwind of horror the calm faces of two martyrs and victors shine on us, and both are those of feeble, aged women.

Marcella, the great lady on the Aventine, was in her palace when Rome was given over to the three dreadful days of pillage. The barbarian soldiers entered her undefended house, and, enraged at finding no treasures there, cruelly beat and scourged her, believing she had hidden them. But all her wealth had been already spent in feeding the poor and bereaved, and the venerable woman

only thanked God “*that she had secured her wealth before the storm came, and that the loss of the city had found her poor, and not made her so.*”

Her courage and patience at last touched the rude soldiers, and they themselves took her to a place of refuge in the church of St. Paul. But the feeble frame had suffered too much to survive, and soon afterwards she died, in the joyful hope of a Christian.

Our second story is as much to the credit of the barbarians as of the Christians.

A fierce soldier entered in quest of plunder into the house of an aged Christian virgin. He demanded in courteous terms the surrender of her treasures. She brought out before him many sacred vessels of gold, beautiful and massive. She told him they belonged to the Christian Church, and had only been committed to her care. “Take them if you dare,” she said, “and answer for your act to God. A defenceless woman, I cannot protect them from your violence. My soul, therefore, is free from sin.”

The soldier stood awe-struck.

A message was sent to the barbarian chief, Alaric, for commands, and an order was instantly sent back that the aged maiden and her treasures should be safely conducted to a church.

Her dwelling was far from the church, and the procession of fierce, barbarian soldiers guarding the feeble woman with her golden treasures wound a long way through the streets.

The people broke into hymns of adoration as she passed tranquilly on ; and, amidst the tumult and wild cries, the name of Christ was borne triumphantly on high.

Does not that Name, thus raised on high, echo down to us through the ages, a promise of the seeds of new life which were hidden underneath that decaying world, and of the victory which Christian courage and love and purity were to gain over those barbarian tribes, shaping them out of chaos into order, out of barbarism into Christendom ?

PART VI.

THE CHRISTIAN WOMEN OF THE MIDDLE AGES.

THE conversion of some of the rude Northern nations to Christianity was through the influence of Christian princesses.

Clotilda, a Christian princess, had been married to Clovis, chief of the Franks, one of the most barbarous and the bravest of the Northern tribes. She had been early disciplined by wrongs and sorrows in her own family.

Her gentle presence always beside him, and her works of mercy, gradually opened her husband's heart to recognize the existence of the All-merciful, so that when she bore him her firstborn son, he consented to have the babe baptized into the Christian Church.

But the child died. The mother had comfort in her sorrow, knowing that the little one was in the keeping of Christ; but King Clovis attributed his death to the anger of the fierce gods of his people.

Nevertheless he suffered their second boy also to be baptized.

This infant also sickened, and seemed pining away; but the mother prayed fervently for its recovery, and health was restored.

Clovis still remained unchristian, but the character and the faith of his wife, her patience, and her prayers had made their way into his heart.

Soon afterwards, in a campaign against his enemies, his army was in danger of being destroyed. In his peril he prayed to the mighty and merciful Being whom his wife worshipped, and vowed if he won the victory he would become a Christian.

The tide of battle turned; the king of the hostile forces was slain; his soldiers yielded, and became subjects of Clovis.

And, to the inexpressible joy of Clotilda, Clovis, on his return from the victory, declared his readiness to be instructed in the Christian faith and baptized.

A holy bishop, Remigius, came and taught the king and his warriors; they were baptized with great festivity in the Church; and the nation was made subject to the Christian law.

Soon afterwards two Christian queens, Bertha, of the same Frankish race of Clovis, and her daughter Ethelburga, welcomed Christian missionaries into our England, and helped to begin the Christian history of the English nation.

Many more fair and gentle ones shine on us

through those stormy ages like doves of peace, rising with gold and silver wings above the storm into the sunshine.

Geneviève, the simple shepherd-girl of Nanterre, near Paris, who, having nothing of her own, yet by her faith in God, and the shining of His likeness in her, succoured and saved numbers, nursing the sick in pestilences, getting food for the needy in famines, and winning by her gentle pleading from the fierce king of the invading host the rescue of captives from slavery and from death. Once, when the city of Paris was besieged by a terrible foe, she went out of the gates at the head of a brave little band, and brought back, on the river which flows through the city, boats laden with corn to the poor starving people inside.

Bathildis, the young English slave, who became wife of the king and queen of the Franks (A.D. 549), who sold all her jewels, and persuaded her husband to take the gold and silver from the palace and from the church to feed the starving in a famine, and also prevailed on him to have a law passed that no Christian should ever more be made a slave. In her widowhood she spent her days in nursing the sick, and died exhorting all around to love one another, and to care for the poor.

Lioba, an Englishwoman, cousin of the great missionary Boniface, who went (about A.D. 719) from Christian England to make the name of Christ known to the kindred races in the North who still knew Him not. Lioba was learned in the

ancient languages and in many things, but above all in the Sacred Scriptures, which she loved to carry about with her. She and other devoted ladies obeyed the call of her cousin Boniface, the great missionary, and went to the wild Northern land to teach the women as he had taught the men, till, by degrees, the whole land was won from barbarism and chaos to Christ and blessed order. Her learning and intelligence enabled her to found schools where girls and women could be taught; but still more, her large and tender heart and her bright and happy temper made them feel the dwelling where she ruled a home.

Her cousin, the great Bishop Boniface, honoured and loved her much; sacred memories of their childhood at home no doubt mingling with his reverence for her character, her piety, and her good sense.

In the latter days of his life, when the people around him had become Christian, and Boniface was honoured among them as a great potentate, his heart still glowed with the fire of his youth, and the longing to win yet more and more of those still wandering in darkness to the love and obedience of our Lord and King; and so, once more, with a faithful band, he went forth to the further North, among savage nations who knew neither him nor his Master.

And there he won many hearts to God; but his enemies triumphed for the moment, and he and his little band were put to death.

Before he had left he earnestly commended his cousin Lioba to the care of his best friend, and desired that her body, when she died, might be laid beside his.

“I wish,” he said, “to await near her the day of resurrection. Those who have laboured together for Christ should receive together their reward.”

Twenty-two years after the martyrdom of Boniface, Lioba still laboured on, teaching and helping all—queens and noble ladies, the poor, the little ones—until at last she died, and was buried beside Boniface, as he had asked; and their names are remembered together as the beginning of much good among the Northern people.

The next picture that rises before us in those dark and stormy times is of a great English lady.

THE ABBESS HILDA.

SHE was of royal race, and in her early youth, about with her great-uncle, King Edwin of Northumbria, she first heard of the faith and ^{554.} mysteries of Christ. Like a fresh spring of life the glad tidings sprang up in her heart, and she kept it there undefiled until she reached the sight of Him in heaven.

She did not marry, but devoted herself from her youth to the study of the Sacred Scriptures, to praise and prayer, and helping and teaching all around her with every power of her clear mind and strong heart, and every influence given her by her royal rank.

She went first to learn in a community of good women where her widowed sister Heresind, mother of a king, had retired. And after that the good Bishop Aidan gave her enough land by a river-side to maintain a household, and with a few like-minded she spent some time in this place, until she was called to rule a large company of Christian women, set apart like herself for good works and prayer.

There her quiet power of ordering and ruling began to show itself. She brought all into order so as to make the most of the gifts of each, as she

had been instructed by learned men; for Bishop Aidan and other religious men, who knew and honoured her, frequently visited and instructed her, because of her natural sense and judgment and readiness to learn, and her delight in the service of God.

When she had lived here some years, always diffusing life and beautiful order around her, she was called to a wider work.

On a lofty height above the sea, with a river at its base, she founded a settlement, now called Whitby, to be a centre of Christian life and work in the land where, still, much ignorance and disorder lingered.

This settlement, or abbey, formed quite a little town in itself, clustered around the church, which was built of wood, and was roofed with thatch, and had very narrow slits for windows, with deep sides sloping outward, that the rain and snow might not beat in upon the worshippers.

On the altar, covered with its fair white cloth, lay a costly copy of the Gospels in Latin, with a sapphire set in the golden cover.

There was a sisterhood of women gathered here, and a brotherhood of men devoted to holy works. The dwellings of the sisters were, for the most part, scattered wooden buildings, some for dormitories, some for schools, one for the refectory. The brothers had their little village apart. In the church they sat in different parts, but their voices blended in the praises of God.

These buildings stood on the brow of the hill, looking over the sea. Along the green and wooded slopes were many huts of the mechanics and farm-labourers, who worked on the abbey lands ; and below, on the banks of the river, was the fishing village, inhabited by the many fishermen who supplied the river with fish. Every one was employed.

Every morning, at daybreak in summer, and before daybreak in winter, as many as could of the community—labourers, fishermen, women and children—met in the church to pray and sing praises to God. And often through the day and night the bells of the church sounded out across the land and over the stormy sea, reminding the sailors and toiling men everywhere, that good men and women were praying for them in the church on the cliff. That community was the very centre and spring of the good which was done in the land.

It was a school for the young, a college of clergymen, and especially of missionary clergymen, and a refuge for the oppressed and the aged. Whilst the kings and nobles were continually journeying from one estate to another to receive their rents, their sons and daughters could be educated in the abbey, free from all the perils and unsettledness of wandering life.

The girls were taught to read the Gospels in their own English tongue, and to sing and spin, and weave and embroider, and some were also taught to read Latin and to write.

The boys were taught arithmetic, and all that was known about the stars and earth, and were exercised by the chase, on foot or on horseback, of the wild boars and other wild animals which haunted the forests around.

There were also guest-chambers for many noble and royal visitors who came from near and far, and there was a refuge for the aged, and another for poor wayfarers.

Pilgrims came from the ancient imperial city of Rome, and from the ancient holy city of Jerusalem, where the Temple had stood on the hill, in which our Lord Jesus Christ taught, and where He died, And a Greek clergyman, who had become an English archbishop, also came there, a citizen of Tarsus, in Asia, the native town of the first great missionary, St. Paul. And also many clergymen from the South and North; some in humble garments, on foot, the Sacred Books their great treasure; some like princes, with trains of horsemen and footmen, telling of beautiful new stone churches, the first built in the English land.

In the community itself none were rich and none were poor, all things being common to all, none having any property, no idlers being permitted, but all working in their different places and with their different gifts for the benefit of all.

And the head and heart of all this busy and fruitful world was the Abbess Hilda. Kings and noble persons came to consult her; and equally the perplexed and troubled in all ranks. Her prudent

counsel, her wise and penetrating sympathy, were free to all. One and another came with burdened hearts and troubled minds, and went away with hearts lightened, and with their way clear before them.

She had her community under strict discipline. Justice and piety and chastity were insisted on, and especially peace and charity. She obliged those under her direction to attend so much to the reading of the Holy Books, and to exercise themselves so much in good works, that many were trained there to rule and teach others throughout the land. Five bishops were taken out of that community, Bosa, Hedda, Oftfor, John, and Wilfrid, men of devoted life and wide influence.

All that knew her called her Mother, it is said, for her singular piety and grace; and her life not only was an example to all near her, but began a new life for many who came and sojourned in the community from afar off.

She was indeed a born queen and ruler, and among other gifts she had the faculty of insight into the gifts of others, and of so setting all to the work fitted for them.

The noblest ruling is when the hand of the ruler, invisible as the hand of God, is only shown by the smooth order of the machinery directed, and the excellence of the work done.

And so it happened that when any especial gift was discovered in any one, it was felt the Abbess Hilda would understand how best it could be used,

and to her the gift was brought, to find its right place in the treasury of God for the Church.

In her neighbourhood lived a poor herdsman who had in him the heart of a poet, but unknown to himself or to any until he grew to be almost an old man.

It was the custom at that time in England, that when a feast was made each guest who could, should sing his song to a harp or lute, for the entertainment of the rest.

One evening when Cædmon, this herdsman, was at a feast, and saw the instrument of music coming towards him, he rose from the table and left the house, because he knew no mirthful song to sing.

He went quietly alone into the stables, and there gave food and water to the horses under his care. Then he lay down on the straw to rest and fell asleep.

But in his sleep one appeared to him in a dream and said, "Cædmon, sing some song to me." He answered, "I cannot sing, and for that reason I retired from the feast." Then the voice said, "Nevertheless you shall sing." "What shall I sing?" he replied. "Sing the beginning of created beings," said the voice. Then, in his dream, he began to sing, in words he had never heard before, "the praises of the Creator, the deeds of the Father of glory." Awaking, the songs he had sung in his dream rang through his heart, though all their beauty and loftiness could never

be rendered ; and soon he added other verses to these, in praise of God.

In the morning he came to the steward, his master, and told him of the gift that had come to him ; and those who heard at once thought of the great Abbess Hilda. She would understand and welcome him, they knew, and to her they conducted him.

The abbess received him graciously, and called together some of the wise and learned men around her. She bade the herdsman tell his dream and repeat his verses, and afterwards they told him stories from the Sacred Books, for he could not read. And the next morning he brought them back these stories rendered into verse, and they all thought that a heavenly gift had been bestowed on him ; and the abbess, embracing the gift of God to the poor man, welcomed him to her community.

And there he lived the rest of his life, learning from all who could teach, "chewing the cud of the good pasture of the Divine Word, and converting the same into harmonious verse. And sweetly turning whatever he learned into music, he made his masters in their turn his hearers," singing of heaven and creation, and God and Christ, and holy life and love, and winning many by the sweetness of his words from evil to good. Until at last, with the sweetest words of faith and charity on his lips, he died and went to God.

The Abbess Hilda, like all who have to serve and guide others in this bewildered and sinful

world, had also the spirit of the warrior in her, and, like a free-born, noble English lady, was able, at due times, earnestly to contend for her flock against falsehood and injustice.

At last, like others of the holiest we know, having served her generation all her life with quenchless zeal and untiring industry, she had to pass through the trial of suffering, and learn to endure as well as to do.

For, six years before she died, the strong, healthy frame began to fail, and she suffered the infirmities of long sickness. Yet during all that time she never failed to return thanks to God for all, and privately and publicly to instruct the flock committed to her charge. But her example taught more than her words, whilst all saw her long life of active duty crowned by those years of cheerful, thankful endurance.

Until, in the seventh year of her sickness, early in the morning she felt her last hour approaching, and gathering together the servants of Christ in her community, she received the sacred Eucharistic Feast our Lord has left us, and entreated them to preserve peace among themselves and with all; and as she spoke, joyfully she felt death approaching, and, as we believe, passed from the darkness and death of this broken life to the fulness of eternal, conscious life with God.

Deeply and widely was the noble woman mourned, for she was most dearly loved. More than one of the good women of the community who devotedly

loved her saw in dreams her happy spirit ascending into the heavenly light, and the company of heaven welcoming her among them.

But; in her community, and throughout the land, there was much weeping. For all felt it was a mother, with a mother's love and rule and counsel, that they had lost.

There are many more beautiful pictures of good women's lives in those dark and stormy times, though there are few of whom we know as much as of the Abbess Hilda.

A.D. 1072. There was good Queen Margaret of Scotland, who brought to the rude Northern land the learning and grace of the more civilized South, loved by the king her husband as a most devoted wife, and honoured as a wise and beautiful being from a higher world ; who ransomed captives, built refuges for needy strangers, directed the education of her own six sons and two daughters, and with her own hands was wont to wait on nine orphans and twenty-four poor people, before she would sit down to a meal.

There was a fair young princess, Elizabeth of Hungary, bride of the young Landgrave of Thuringia, who loved her most tenderly. In her beautiful home, and in the days of her happy married life, her heart glowed with pity for the sick and needy ; and she built hospitals for the diseased and destitute on the slopes of the hill on which her palace stood, and would creep down to them with

her ladies, with dainties and comforts from her own table, to feed the hungry, and to bind up the wounds of the suffering. And afterwards, when her husband died, and the sunshine passed with his dear presence from her earthly life, and the selfish and ambitious amongst his kindred turned against her, and drove her and her little children from her palaces, her sweetness and patience never failed. She still continued to serve and succour the wretched with her own hands when all else was taken from her, until the hearts of her enemies were softened, her estates were restored, and she spent the rest of her short life in building hospitals and refuges, and in ruling her state for the benefit of all; and died at twenty-four, most dearly loved and honoured, and remembered century after century as the friend and patroness of the poor.

And there was the dyer's daughter, Catharine of Siena, mightier than queens, who simply by the power of her prayers, her character, and her life of holy love, shed peace and blessing around her, reconciled contending states and princes, and brought men of wicked and violent life to repentance and goodness.

And there was one, a peasant girl, as royal in her service and as tender in her pitifulness as any.

With the sketch of her we will leave those ages of storm and fire, of chaos and creation, called the Middle Ages.

JOAN OF ARC, THE MAID OF ORLEANS.

FOUR hundred years ago, about A.D. 1420, the two great nations of the English and the French had been at war for nearly a hundred years.

The English kings thought they had a claim on the French throne, and so, reign after reign, Englishmen were torn from their homes, and armies were sent to lay waste and conquer France.

We need not enter into the causes, the rights and wrongs, of this long war. I have only to tell you the story of one whose heart was moved with overwhelming compassion to put an end to the miseries it wrought.

In a little house of grey stone, in a small border village called Domrémy, near which the contending armies often passed, and whither the poor houseless fugitives often fled for refuge, lived a young girl called Jeanne d'Arc.

The village was in a pleasant valley, called the Valley of Many Colours, perhaps from the multitudes of flowers in the meadows. A river flowed through the valley, and above it spread wide forests.

Joan's father was a peasant farmer, an upright, honourable man, who loved his daughter most

dearly, with the true love which prized her honour more than her life.

Her mother was a good, steadfast, devout woman, from whom she learned the Christian Creed, and how to pray.

The clergyman of the village also taught her the Christian faith and precepts, and many beautiful histories of the holy men and women of old; and he said he had never known so beautiful a soul as this child's.

She grew up fair and tall, and well-formed, with a broad open brow, dark eyes, and small capable hands.

Her little companions were very fond of her. She used to dance and play with them, and to make garlands under the great beech tree on the edge of the forest, which was their favourite play-place.

She had also much inborn skill in nursing the sick, and one little boy remembered all his life how tenderly she had nursed him through a dangerous sickness, when herself only a child.

She had great delight in prayer. In the church; in the fields, when the church bell tolled the hour of prayer; in her own little bedroom, with the small square window which looked across the little garden to the church. Once she made some little cakes and gave them to the bell-ringer to persuade him not to forget to ring the church bell which told the labourers in the fields when to pray.

Her father's little farm sloped up from the river

to the forest. The villagers had a common pasture, and here Joan would often take her turn in herding the village cows, guiding them home to their separate stalls at night, or driving them in the pastures by day.

But from time to time poor frightened fugitives, hungry and houseless, driven from their homes by the soldiers, would take refuge in the village. And often the little maid Joan would give up her own bed to the poor troubled wanderers, and sit up all night by the chimney corner.

So it came that her whole heart was filled with two thoughts ; the great and good God, the Saviour, who pitied and died for the world, and the world which He died for. And, as with all good people, her heart went to that bit of this world which she knew.

“God, Messire my King, the King of heaven,” as she used to name Him, and the *“great pity for France,”* filled her whole heart.

As she grew up, strong and beautiful, she was sought in marriage ; but her heart was set on her work of succour.

As she looked from her little bedroom window across the garden to the church, she believed that heavenly voices called her to go and succour her country.

These voices came to her first when she was about thirteen. They were *“very sweet and beautiful,”* she afterwards said. But she told no one of this. She was no prattler. She had the gift of

silence and of waiting, the atmosphere in which so many of the great words and works of the world have grown. She went about her daily work, tending the cattle, helping her mother, gentle and serviceable to all.

But the longing to help her devastated country, and the belief that God had sent her to help, burned within her like a fire, until at last she had to speak.

At that time the King of France had scarcely a province of his kingdom left him, and was flying hopelessly hither and thither. One of his few large cities, called Orleans, had long been besieged, and the people in it were hungry and hopeless and wretched.

Joan said at last that God had sent her to raise the siege of Orleans, and to have the King of France crowned in the great cathedral of Rheims, at that time in the hand of his enemies, and to deliver the whole land from the invaders.

When she first spoke her father was very angry, and said he had rather she should die than go forth to the army at Orleans.

The first person who believed in her mission was her uncle.

When first he introduced her to the governor of the district, as one having a divine message, the governor objected and mocked.

She spoke of being sent by "her Lord."

"Who is thy Lord?" he asked, scoffingly.

"It is the King of heaven," she said.

But gradually her pure and prayerful life, and her faith, won one after another to believe in her words. And after many months she was sent forth by this same governor, carefully guarded, to give her message to the King of France. She was only seventeen when she went forth thus through the ravaged land, beset with foes.

The guard of soldiers who went with her came to believe in her. One of them said an evil thought was impossible beside her, so true and pure was she.

She was brought to the king. At first they tried to perplex her by disguising the king, and making one of the courtiers personate him.

But the young peasant girl was not to be thus deceived. She went up to the true king at once, though she had never seen him before, and knelt at his feet.

A council of wise men, clergymen and nobles and lawyers, were appointed to test her mission. They tried, and sifted her with all kinds of puzzling questions; but her simplicity and truth carried her straight through all.

“Joan!” said one, “you ask for men-at-arms to fight, but if God wills the enemy should be overcome, there is no need for men-at-arms; the will of God alone can gain the victory.”

“The men-at-arms will fight,” she said, “and God will give the victory,” expressing in these simple words the whole secret of the victorious life of faith.

The great ladies of the court, also (at least,

those who were good among them ; for instance, the young Queen Yolande), were quite won by her simplicity and modesty, and the people believed in her as a messenger of God.

And so, in spite of the intrigues and opposition of evil and indolent men, they soon sent her to Orleans with a body of soldiers to raise the siege.

She would never go to battle unless the soldiers confessed their sins and promised to amend, and all camp-followers of evil life were sent away.

And so, with her white banner embroidered with the lilies of France, and another with the picture of the Crucified on it, she rode past the enemy's forts, and no man fired a shot at her, and thus she entered the besieged city with her little army, bringing provisions with her. But, far more than food or soldiers, she brought into the city hope and prayer and repentance. The grateful citizens thronged around her. She went with them all and knelt down and prayed in the church. Indeed, from the moment of her entrance, all felt the siege was really raised.

She would not suffer a sortie to be made or a shot to be fired till, at the risk of her life, she had gone again and again down to the enemy's lines as a messenger of peace, entreating them to depart to their own land in peace, unless they would unite with her people for some great Christian enterprise of rescue and deliverance. But she pleaded in vain. The hostile army had never yet tasted defeat, and they thought her mad, and

mocked and reviled her. Yet within one week the strong forts which girded the city round were all taken, the whole of the hostile army was in retreat, and Orleans was set free.

And within three months of leaving her native valley, much of the country was reconquered, and the king was solemnly crowned in the great cathedral at Rheims, as she had promised; and Joan knelt at his feet, with her white banner in her hand, and said with tears, that now "the pleasure of God was fulfilled."

I cannot tell you all the vicissitudes and windings of her subsequent most pathetic story. At first the French court loaded her with presents, rich clothes, furs, and jewels. The king gave her fine war-horses, assigned her a household like that of a princess, placed her beside him at feasts and in processions. The princes and nobles gave her splendid presents. The people thronged around her to kiss the hem of her garment.

But for all this she cared not in the least; such things were not and could not be her reward. She wanted only to save her country from the scourge of war, and nothing could satisfy her but steadfast endeavours to this end.

"I am pricked to the heart," she said, "until my work is done."

Her delight was still in prayer. Childlike as ever, she loved to kneel beside the children in church, and to pray and receive the Holy Sacrament with them.

She never thought she bore a charmed life. Her courage came not from superstition, but from faith ; not from recklessness of consequences, but from readiness to suffer or do anything she believed God would have her do.

At the siege of Orleans she was severely wounded by an arrow. She wept bitterly at the pain, but when some one advised her to have some magic spells, thought to be powerful, said over the wound, she firmly refused.

“I had rather die,” she said, “than sin or do anything contrary to the will of God.”

And, all through, she only acted as a messenger of mercy. War was, to her, only the rough road to peace.

She wept over a slain enemy. She never herself carried her sword into battle, but only her white lily banner, lest she should hurt any one. In her great purpose she never lost the woman’s pitiful heart.

Once, after a great victory, seeing some of her own soldiers beating and ill-using a prisoner, she sprang from her horse, took the wounded enemy’s head in her arms, and soothed and comforted him until he died.

And, in the presence of mortal peril, she was calm and clear-sighted as when watching her father’s flocks. Often she saw danger threatening others which they could not see. Once standing beside a prince of the blood royal, before a fortress, she warned him of a gun pointed against him and

saved his life. Her vision into heavenly realities made her sight clearer for earthly duty and danger.

And so she worked steadfastly on for her great purpose of delivering her people from the horrors of war, contending not only against the open enemy without, but against the treachery of indolent and base men in the court, until the low-minded courtiers, who envied her success and hated her holy simplicity and earnestness, succeeded in their intrigues against her ; and at last she was betrayed into the hands of the foe, and was kept in prison, and tried without mercy, and at length burnt to death as a witch, neither her own feeble-minded king nor one of those she had so rescued lifting a finger to save her.

At the end, when she stood lifted up on the scaffold, bound to the stake, with the smoke and flames rising around her, she asked for a cross to be lifted up, to remind her of the Saviour who died for us on the cross ; and a poor English soldier, touched with pity, broke his staff, and hastily making a cross of it, reached it up to her. She clasped it thankfully to her heart, and then a clergyman brought a large cross from a neighbouring church, and held it up before her dying eyes, standing near her.

Clear-sighted to the last, thinking more of others than of herself, seeing the smoke and flames blown towards him, she told him to go further off "lest they should hurt him." And so she died, at nineteen, with the name of Jesus on her lips.

But her work of rescue and mercy for France and England was done.

The dreadful Hundred Years' War was over.

No more did the kings of one country send their subjects to fight and die for the conquest of the other, and for the misery of both.

France was rescued, and England also was turned from the wrong path back to her own great work among the nations, and all through this peasant girl.

In all these lives, so varied in circumstance and character, we find the secret strength is the same—the faith that Jesus Christ our Lord is living evermore really in the midst of us, though we cannot see Him, recognizing and remembering every service done to the poor and needy and suffering as done to Himself. And in all we find the secret fountain of faith in God who is love springing up as a well of life in the heart, and flowing forth in deeds of kindness on all around, from the homes it blesses to the furthest stranger or the lowest outcast it can reach.

And so it came about that by the aid of such lives the darkness and confusion of those times was conquered, the wild Northern tribes were brought into light and order, and the new world arose from the flood.

PART VII.

CHRISTIAN WOMEN OF MODERN TIMES.

Two great campaigns of the Christian Church were over; the conflict with the ancient heathenism of Greece and Rome, which characterized the age of martyrs, and the conquest to order of the rude Northern tribes which had swept away the old Roman world.

Christianity had prevailed in Europe, and, speaking broadly, the social life had taken the form it wears still.

Both campaigns had ended not only in victory but in conquest. And yet the lives I have still to tell you of are as much the lives of martyrs, that is of witnessing-sufferers, and of victorious warriors as those of old.

The warfare of the Christian Church continues still. "Militant here on earth" is the title she bears, not in one age or in one country only, but everywhere and always.

The old enemy of man who entered the first

paradise is not shut out of the Church. The distrust of God, which made Eve listen and yield to him, is not rooted out of our hearts yet. If this warfare against evil, in individuals or in a body, is forgotten for a time, it will be found that it is not because the victory is complete, but because the good soldiers are slumbering: and in the slumber the foes, who never slumber, are stealthily gaining ground.

For though the field of battle changes, and the mode of fighting, the foes do not change, and they are, ever, when we see them truly, unmasked, the same foes—the same against us in England as against you in India; the same against us now everywhere as against our Lord and His disciples in Syria of old.

The real essential battle-field is, we must remember, always in the heart itself. It is the victory over ourselves, over the evil within, which enables us to gain any real victories over the evil without.

Every good life in this world is and must be a warfare. What makes it good is that the warfare is a conquest.

In this great battle-field the conflict is quite as ceaselessly needed, and quite as efficiently carried on, by women as by men.

But the essential position of woman being the helpmeet, her share in the work is naturally more hidden, and the records of it are necessarily scanty.

In the story of wars little space is given to those

who provide food for the combatants, or bear the wounded from the field, and bind up the wounds; although as much skill and as much courage, in their own way, are needed for these unnoticed deeds of succour, as for the strategy which arranges the campaign or for the charge which carries the day.

In two ways, chiefly, the lives of good and great women are illumined for us through the mists of time, so as to be visible afar off.

Either the natural world of woman, which is the home, is lifted up to our sight by lofty rank, or is laid bare by especial sorrows, so that the beauty of the lives lived there, as in countless unknown homes beside them, is shown openly to the world.

Or, the natural gifts of womanhood are, by especial natural circumstances, or by an overmastering passion of pity, poured forth to remedy the sorrows and combat the sins of the wide world outside the home.

Thus two beautiful companies of good women rise radiant before us; firstly, that of the daughter, the wife, the mother, the sister, treading the common path of duty, but brought into the vision of the world by some especial blaze of glory, or some peculiar fires of sorrow.

And then the glorious army of succour; matrons and maidens, old and young, rich and poor, pouring out the treasures of woman's heart to relieve the sick, the suffering, the sinful, throughout the world.

Of the first company I will give you sketches of

a few, as representatives of the numbers like them, known and unknown.

From the second I will give you such pictures as I can of a few others, as types of a great multitude whom no man can number, ceaselessly shedding benedictions on the world, from the days of Mary, the blessed sister of Martha, who broke the alabaster box on the head of our Lord, and Dorcas who made the coats and garments, to this day.

My first story shall be of a heroic daughter.

PRASCOVIA LOPOULOFF

WAS the daughter of a Russian officer who had been banished for life from his country to the wilds of Siberia by the capricious Emperor, Paul I.

She was only three years old when her father and mother were sent away from their own country.

The hearts of the parents were very sad, for they were never to return home any more. They were to spend all the rest of their lives in an icy cold country, where the frosts and bitter cold of winter lasted nine months, and the sun for many weeks was never seen, away from all they loved, and allowed only a little daily pittance to keep them from starving. The mother, who had been used to a comfortable life, had to do all the work of the family; but she was patient and worked hard, and as she grew up the little girl learned to help her. Little Prascovia had never known any other life, and she was not unhappy; the love of her parents made sunshine for her. She was taught to trust and obey the good God who cares for us everywhere, and she was content to help in the poor little home, and glad when she could add to its comforts by helping the women of the village wash the clothes, or by working at the harvest in the fields,

joyfully bringing home to her parents vegetables or eggs as her payment.

But her father could not forget the past, his far better position, and his active life in the army, and he was a very unhappy man. Even the beauty of his daughter, as she grew into early womanhood, with fine dark eyes, an open brow, an oval-shaped face, and a sweet grave smile, made him sadder, as he thought of her hard life and of all she had lost. "It grieved me sorely," he said, "to see my child thus wearing away her life in servile work." Less and less did he try to hide his misery, until his trouble weighed day by day upon the girl, and she prayed every day that he might be set free from exile and allowed to go home to his own country.

One day, when she had finished her prayer, it flashed suddenly into her heart, like lightning, that she herself might go and ask the Emperor to pardon her father.

The thought caused her great agitation; she always believed it to be an inspiration from God. Day after day, filled with this new hope, she prayed that this great joy might be given her, at any cost. Often she went alone into a quiet nook among the pine-woods near the house, to ask God for strength and guidance, and to think how she could do it.

It was some time before she ventured to tell her plan to her parents, and when she did, kind as they were, they were half angry, half amused, at what seemed a wild dream. Her mother, half smiling, half

weeping, gave her a kitchen cloth and said, laughing, "Here, my dear, dust the table, and then you may set off for the Emperor's city, St. Petersburg, at your ease."

Prascovia wept bitterly that her thought, which had become to her faith and love so solid, should be treated like a dream.

But nothing could discourage her. God, the all-merciful and almighty, she believed, had set her this task of love, and through all mockery and hindrances she prayed on for help to do it, waiting for her father's consent.

At length her faith and steadfastness conquered. Her father sent for a permission for her to travel to Russia, a passport which would prevent the police from stopping her on the way.

After six months' delay, the passport came; but when it arrived, her father locked it up, saying he had only allowed it to be asked for because he thought it would never be given, and that he would never let his child, a girl of eighteen, set out alone on such a journey.

Still she persevered, hoping and praying on, day by day, and week by week, strong in her love to her parents and to God.

At last her mother said if her father would yield she also would consent. Once more the daughter knelt, and clasping her father's knees, entreated him to give her the passport and let her go.

And at length the father did grant her desire. But he said despondingly—

"Poor child! do you think you can speak to the Emperor as you speak to your father? Soldiers guard every entrance to his palace, and you will never pass the threshold."

But nothing could discourage Prascovia. She was ready to risk all, save disobedience; and at last the day for her departure arrived.

On the 8th of September, she was dressed at dawn, with her little bag of clothes on her shoulder.

Her father insisted on her taking the one silver coin which was all the money left him in the world. All the rest of the little community deemed it a wild project and would do nothing to forward it, except two of the poorest of the exiles who lived near; and these came to see her off on this morning of her departure, and tried to press on her the one silver coin and the few copper coins which were all they possessed. These she would not accept, but she promised to remember them if ever she could help them, and faithfully she kept her word.

When the first sunbeams shone into the room, they all sat silent a few minutes together, according to a custom of their country when any one is going on a journey. And then they knelt down together and prayed in silence; and her parents blessed her, and watched her tenderly from the threshold.

One or two went with her as far as they were permitted, being prisoners of state, and then left her in the company of some girls who were going

to a neighbouring village. But most of the people of her own village laughed at her purpose when she was gone as a proof of insanity.

The next morning she awoke, lonely and tired. The great journey, so long hoped for, had begun at last. In the first solitary steps through the wild forests terror and loneliness almost overcame her; but she remembered one of the stories of our Sacred Books which they had been used to read in her home, how an angel had once come from heaven to help Hagar, a poor lonely slave who was watching her only son die of thirst in the wilderness, and how he showed her a well of water which saved the boy's life, and she was comforted.

That first day, she lost her way, and found herself again at a village she had passed the day before. But her faith and purpose never faltered: she knew that in the paths of God hindrances are not to turn us back, but only to make us lift up our hearts more to Him who leads the blind in a way they know not.

"I have been often tried," she said, "but never deceived, in trusting God."

One of her difficulties was that she did not know the names of the towns between Siberia and the imperial city, and when she asked the way to St. Petersburg, which was hundreds of miles off, people laughed at her as if she were mad.

Nevertheless she found her way.

At night, in the little villages, where all the people were poor, she always found kindly shelter.

But in the towns, with large houses, she was often spoken roughly to as an idle vagabond.

For example, one day, near a place called Kamouïcheff, she was overtaken by a furious storm. A tree was blown down across her path. She took refuge in a thicket. It was dark before the storm ceased, and all night she remained hidden in the thicket, shivering and wet to the skin.

At dawn she crept back to the road, and a kind peasant gave her a lift in his cart, and set her down at early morning in a street of a large village. She fell down in the muddy road as she left the cart, and hungry and cold, with clothes soaked and soiled, she ventured to ask shelter at one house after another, but was refused everywhere, until she sank down exhausted on the steps of a cottage door, and even thence was roughly driven away by the mistress. At last she crept to the steps of the church, saying to herself that none could drive her from the house of God. But the door of the church was locked, and when she sat down on the steps outside, the little boys of the village hooted at her and called her a vagrant and a thief. Two hours she sat thus, mocked, and cold, and hungry, praying for strength to endure; until at length a kind woman saw her, and pressing through the rude mob of boys, offered to take her home. But her limbs were so stiff and her feet so swollen, that she could not move. Then the villagers, seeing her wretched state, were sorry, and got a cart and

carried her to the kind woman's house, where she rested several days; and when she started again, one of the poor villagers gave her a pair of boots.

She never quite recovered from the effects of that night of cold and hunger.

But still she pressed on. And she used to say, in telling her story afterwards, that the rebuffs and unkindnesses she met with had been few, and the acts of kindness beyond counting. She used to show her gratitude to any who showed her hospitality by helping to sweep the rooms, or to wash the clothes, or by doing any sewing she could for them.

One night she had a great alarm.

She had been refused a night's lodging in every house in the village, when one old man who had turned her rudely away called her back. His looks were very unpleasant, and when she entered the cottage his wife was more repulsive still. There was only one wretched room, lighted by oak-slips set in a hole in the wall.

When she had entered they shut the door and carefully closed the shutters, and then they said to her—

“Whence come you?”

“I come from Ischim, and I go to Petersburg,” she said.

“Oh, oh!” was the reply; “then you have plenty of money, no doubt, for such a journey?”

“I have only twenty-four copecks” (copper coins) “left,” she said.

"You lie," retorted the old woman. "Yes, surely, you lie."

However, they gave her some potatoes and told her to lie down and sleep on one of the ledges of the stove, where Russian peasants usually pass the night. She could not sleep, and as she lay there in terror, she heard one say to another in a whisper—

"She must have more money."

And then the other answered—

"I saw a little bag round her neck."

And then the other—

"No one saw her come in here; she is not known to be in the village."

She felt sure they meant to murder her, and the blood seemed to freeze in her veins; but she kept back her tears, lay still, and prayed softly with all her might to her Father in heaven.

At length the old woman came to her and pulled the bag from her neck, and began feeling her clothes, and took off her boots, while the old man held the light. And then, finding no money worth stealing, the pair went away and lay down, and soon Prascovia heard them breathing in sleep, in the dark; and she thanked God, and fell fast asleep herself.

In the morning she found a plentiful breakfast ready for her, and when she opened her bag again she found the four and twenty copper coins in it had increased to a hundred and twenty.

The ill-looking pair said they had mistaken her

at first for a thief. But she always believed that they had meant to rob, and perhaps murder her, but that God had heard her prayers and softened their hard hearts.

Another time, when she had set out early in the morning, before the villagers were up, she was sorely frightened by all the dogs flying at her. Running away and striking at them with her stick only enraged them the more, and one of them rushed at her and tore the hem of her dress. Then she threw herself on her face on the ground and prayed, commanding her soul to God, if she was to die thus. "I felt," she said, "that God, who had saved me from the storm and from the thieves, could save me now;" and the next moment she felt a cold nose on her neck. One of the dogs was smelling her; but not one of them attempted to bite her, until a peasant passing by came and drove them off.

But as she journeyed on, the terrible Northern winter was fast coming on; until the snow fell so thick and lay so deep, that the strongest men could not safely walk through it. She had to wait day after day; but her kind hosts saw how her heart was panting to reach the Emperor's city and win the pardon, and at last they found some carriers taking provisions to the city of Ekatherinenburg, who consented to take her with them.

The brave girl had no clothing warm enough for such a journey, and none was to be bought in those poor villages. But the poor carriers were kind, and

wrapped her up in one of the coverings of their goods. The cold proved, however, too severe for her ; her cheek was bitten with the frost, and it was thought she must be left behind.

She wept bitterly at the delay, and moreover the master of the inn where they were did not wish to keep her. And so at last her friends the carriers, poor as they were, collected among them money enough to buy a sheepskin for her. But none was to be bought. The villagers had only just enough for themselves. In this extremity at length the carriers agreed to lend her one of their own fur pelisses, and go without, themselves, in turns. Thus they wrapped Prascovia up and she was warm, and the carriers took it in turns to do without the pelisse, changing every two or three miles ; the one who gave it up for the time wrapping the covering of the goods around him, curling his feet under him, and singing aloud to keep himself warm, while Prascovia prayed in her heart that the good, brotherly men might take no harm.

At the inn at Ekatherinenburg, the landlady told her of a benevolent lady, called Madame Milin, who would be sure to help her.

Prascovia resolved to go and ask her advice the next day. But first she went to church, to thank God and pray.

Her worn dress, and her devotion in prayer, fixed the attention of a lady, who asked her name as she came out of church.

Prascovia asked in return where lived Madame

Milin, of whose benevolence she had heard so much.

"I am afraid," said the lady, "this Madame Milin's benevolence is much exaggerated. But come with me, and I will take care of you."

When they had gone a little way together, the lady pointed out a door and said it was Madame Milin's, and when the poor girl knocked she found from the servants' faces that the lady who had spoken so kindly to her was no other than Madame Milin herself.

All the rest of the terrible winter this young girl rested at the home of Madame Milin. There she learned to read and write, which, busy as she had been all her life with hard work, she had not done before. And in the spring, when travelling was possible again, the lady sent her on her way by a river, in a barge, under the care of a gentleman she knew.

But Prascovia's trials were not over yet. The gentleman with whom she was to travel fell ill and died. She was again left alone, and it happened that she, with two other travellers, was accidentally pushed into the river Volga by one of the barge-men's oars. They were soon pulled out, but the cold wet clothes hung around her, and when she was landed she had no friends to take refuge with.

Before seeking shelter, she went first into a church to pray.

This church was attached to the dwelling-house of a community of good women.

Though the church was empty, she heard them singing evening hymns behind a grating in their house.

She ventured to knock at the door to ask a night's lodging there. The lady at the head of the community listened to her story, received her very kindly, and made her sleep in her own room, and rest with them a few days. Before these days were over cold and wet had brought on a severe illness.

The good women nursed her tenderly. Many times the physicians despaired of her life; but at the worst she never despaired, for she said—

“I do not believe my hour is come. I hope God will allow me to finish my work.”

And she did indeed recover, and was sent on with letters of introduction from the kind abbess to a merchant in St. Petersburg.

So at last the long, lonely journey was over. The imperial city was reached. But there was much to make her remember her father's words. “You think it as easy to speak to the Emperor as to your father,” he had said. “But the Emperor's palaces are guarded by soldiers.”

She had indeed reached the great imperial city, but the Emperor seemed as far off as ever, the Emperor and the pardon for which she had endured all this peril and toil.

The wife of the merchant who had received her into his house was not unkind, but took no trouble to help her; and she was, moreover, not high

enough in the world to know any one who knew the Emperor.

One visitor drew up a petition for Prascovia to present. And day by day she waited at the stairs of the senate-house to present it. But the petition was ignorantly worded, and not in the right form, and when the poor girl held it to any who she thought might have access to the imperial court and be able to help, she was sometimes roughly rebuked. Sometimes a coin was tossed to her as to a beggar; but no one listened or offered to take up her case.

Again help came to her, as so often before, through prayer.

The terrible Russian winter was not yet over. The imperial city is divided by a great river. A lady to whom she had an introduction, and who could have helped her, lived on the other side of this river, the Neva; and the river was at this time im-passable, because the hard ice which had made it like a road for sledges through the winter was now partly broken up, and came floating down in great blocks, which knocked against each other and made it impossible to cross in sledges as in winter, or in boats as in summer.

At length came the Christian festival of Easter: the resurrection of our Lord Jesus from the dead. It comes in spring, the new life of the Church and of the earth bursting out together.

Prascovia rejoiced in the joyous hymns and prayers in the great churches of the city. And on

Easter-day she said to her hostess that her heart was full of hope, and she knew now she should succeed at last.

The hostess said—

“ I would give no more petitions to senators and courtiers. You might as well give them to that iron man ; ” and as she spoke she pointed to the iron statue of the Emperor Peter the Great.

“ God is Almighty,” Prascovia replied ; “ and if He would He could make that iron man stoop and take my petition.”

The hostess laughed, but as she looked up at the statue she just happened to observe for the first time that the river Neva was once more crossed by the bridge of boats ; and, having a little time to spare, she offered to take her guest at once to see the lady on the other side.

The lady received her kindly, and said she had a relation high in office who could have helped her, but unfortunately they were not on good terms. “ Nevertheless,” she said, “ I will put aside the quarrel, and take the first steps. And it will be happy if you are the means of reconciliation.”

It is the custom in that country for those who have had quarrels to be reconciled to each other at the high Festival of the Resurrection. And at the very moment when these words were spoken this gentleman came into his cousin’s house.

“ Christ is risen ! ” is the Easter greeting. “ Christ is risen indeed ! ” is the response ; and with the Easter kiss of peace, old quarrels are laid aside.

So it happened this day. The estranged relation came in with the Easter greeting. The lady laid aside the quarrel and introduced the young girl to the great man. He at once interested himself in her story, and told her to apply no more to courtiers, but to get an introduction and go straight to the Emperor, throw herself on his mercy, and plead for her father's pardon.

The Emperor who had condemned her father had long been dead."

Her next step forward was an introduction to the secretary of the Empress-mother, one of the kindest of women, and at length orders were given that she was to be presented to this Empress that very evening.

When the Empress-mother's secretary told her this good news, her eyes filled with tears, and she said, looking upwards—

"My God, not in vain have I put my trust in Thee."

She did not disturb herself at all about her dress, or about the ceremonial of the court. Indeed, she never thought of herself.

When first she saw the palace she said—

"Oh, if my father could see me, how glad he would be! My God, finish Thy work."

Mary, the Empress-mother, received her most graciously. With gentle self-possession she quietly told her story. The Empress-mother praised her filial love and devotion, and herself promised her an introduction to the Emperor, and also presented

her with three hundred roubles. She had started on her journey, you remember, with one.

Quiet and self-possessed as she had been during this interview, when it was over and a lady asked her if she was content, she could only reply by a torrent of tears. "Not in vain, O my God," she said, "have I trusted Thee."

The next morning she woke with a cry of joy, and could scarcely believe she was not in a dream.

Two days afterwards the Empress-mother herself took the noble girl to see the Emperor and his wife, the Empress Elizabeth.

She was most graciously received, was presented with a gift of five thousand roubles, and, infinitely more than all, received the promise which meant that her father should be pardoned.

Now that the Emperor had thus honoured her, all the ladies of the court welcomed her to their houses. Quiet and simple as ever, she received these attentions gratefully; but these were not her reward.

She was shown through the magnificent imperial palace by two ladies of the court.

When they pointed out to her the Emperor's throne, she stopped.

"Is that the throne?" she exclaimed. "Is that what I dreaded so much in Siberia?"

She had seen the Emperor himself without alarm, and had pleaded with him fearlessly; but at this symbol of his dreadful power, all her fears and hopes, and her long trials and perils, rushed on her heart.

“The Emperor’s throne!” she said, and all but fainted. Then kneeling down and kissing the steps, she said aloud, “Father, father! see where the Divine Power has led me! May God bless this throne, bless him who sits on it, and make him as happy as he is making me.”

The generous heart must and will give. The prayer which had brought her father pardon, might bring blessings also on him who pardoned! At last the pardon was drawn out and given her, and she was asked if she had any favour to ask for herself.

She had nothing to ask for herself; only two more petitions for the pardon of the two poor fellow-exiles who had believed in her and had wished to give her all the little money left to them when she began her journey.

And this generous joy also was granted her.

The two aged gentlemen so long exiled were pardoned at her request, and permitted to return to their homes.

As soon as possible, the good news was sent to her parents in Siberia, and the happy daughter set out to meet them.

By the same messenger she sent also the pardon of her two old friends, with some money of her own to help them on their journey home.

At the convent of Nishni, where the abbess and the good nuns had nursed her so kindly, as soon as she saw the good abbess she eagerly asked if there were any news of her parents.

"Excellent news," said the abbess. "I will tell you in my rooms."

Prascovia followed her silently, and there in the abbess's room stood her father and mother, pardoned and liberated by means of her peril and toil and prayer.

They would have fallen on their knees before their child, in an ecstasy of gratitude for her devotion.

But she herself knelt down, and exclaimed, "What are you doing? It is God, God only, who worked for us. Thanks be to His providence for the wonders He has wrought for us."

So the noble daughter won her reward. Do you think she deserved also to be rewarded with all kinds of earthly splendour and wealth?

She deserved it certainly, if any ever did. But such things were not and could not be her reward. She was not able to care for them, any more than a full-grown man or a woman can be rewarded with a little child's toys.

And God had better things in store for her.

She went to live in a community of good women, and her joy was still, as her strength had always been, in loving and praising God, and feeling His love and presence, and in helping others.

But her health had been broken by the hardships of her long journey.

And gradually her strength declined, until one day she could no longer rise to sing hymns and pray with her sisters in the church. And so, at

their usual morning prayer, one of them who was her own especial friend stayed by her sick-bed with her, and began to chant the prayers aloud.

But even this Prascovia was too weak to bear, and she asked her friend to whisper the prayers softly.

The friend went on softly saying the prayers by the dying girl, while the rest of the sisters were singing in the church.

The dusk deepened as she prayed quietly there by the bed ; and when the rest of the community came back from the church, and brought a light into the sick-room, they found the beautiful dark eyes closed, the calm sweet face calmer than ever.

Her hands were crossed on her breast, as if in prayer.

She had indeed fallen into that sleep from which no voice but that of the Lord our Saviour could waken her.

Her life-pilgrimage of toil and love was over. She had entered on the joy of Him whose joy is always to succour and to save.

LADY RACHEL RUSSELL.

AFTER this story of what a daughter can do and suffer for her parents, we will turn to the history of a lady who lives before us as an example of a noble Christian wife.

The Lady Rachel Russell belonged by birth and by marriage to two of our noblest English houses.

Her life was a great contrast to that of the noble girl I have just been telling you of, most of it being spent in prosperity, and lasting to very old age.

I choose it, not because it is unlike other lives of other good and noble matrons amongst us, but because a terrible sorrow in the middle of it reveals to us like a flash of lightning the beauty and goodness of a character which otherwise would have been hidden from us in the retirement of the home of which she was the light.

She was married in her thirty-seventh year to her second husband, afterwards Lord William Russell. Her first marriage had been contracted at seventeen. She had been widowed some years when she met Lord William Russell, then a younger son, and not rich, and consented to become his wife.

The affection between them was very strong. She bore him two daughters and a son.

They spent fourteen years of the most perfect

union and happiness together. He was a man of few words, but of a deep, steadfast heart, and of a judgment and character universally respected, devoted to the welfare of his country, as Lady Rachel was devoted to him.

He was much away from home on public business ; and during these absences she wrote many letters to him which give us glimpses of their happy home-life, and of the complete companionship they had with each other.

She speaks of the playful prattle of their children, and of the daily pleasures and interests of their little world of home. She also gives him clear, concise accounts of what was passing in the Houses of Parliament, the great world of the State. She warns him of political perils, but never weakens him by feeble regrets ; and through every page glows her fervent love for him, consecrated and deepened by her love to God and hope of eternal life.

During a short separation three years after their marriage, she writes : "I write this to my dear husband, because I love to be busied either in speaking of him or to him. It is an inexpressible joy to consider I shall be with the person I most and only long to be with before another week is past. I should condemn my sense of this expected happiness as weak and pitiful if I could tell it you. No, my best life, I can say but little ; but think all you can, you cannot think too much : my heart makes it all good.

“ My best life, you that know so well how to love, and to oblige, make my felicity entire by believing my heart possessed with all the gratitude, honour, and passionate affection to your person any creature is capable of. What have I to ask, but a continuance, if God see fit, of these present enjoyments ; if not, a submission without a murmur to His most unerring Providence, having a thankful heart for the years I have been so perfectly contented in ? Let us cheerfully expect to be together to a good old age. Excuse me if I dwell too long on this ; it is from my opinion that, if we can be prepared for all conditions, we can with the greater tranquillity enjoy the present, which I hope will be long ; though when we change it will be for the better, I trust, through the merits of Christ. Let us daily pray it may be so, and then admit of no fears. He knows best when we have had enough here.”

Fears were evidently in her heart, the shadow of the great sunshine of her love.

And after those fourteen years of happiness the dreaded blow came.

It was a time of strife and peril in the nation, and Lord William Russell, in seeking what he believed the welfare of his country, which he loved above his own life, fell under the displeasure of the king, and was thrown into prison in the Tower of London.

From his first arrest he, knowing how powerful were his enemies, felt his cause hopeless.

Lady Rachel's anxieties had begun even before the danger ; but when the blow fell, she never gave way for an instant to depression, or uttered one vain regret, but spent every moment, and used every power she had, in sustaining her husband, and in making every possible effort for his defence. Danger cleared her sight, and strengthened her nerve to ward it off from him.

She felt it might help him if she was allowed to sit beside him at his public trial, ready to do anything for him he wanted. This was an unusual thing, but she asked and obtained permission to do it.

"My resolution will hold out," she wrote to him. "Pray let yours."

And day after day her resolution did hold out, until the moment came when she could help him. It was no slight trial of nerve to sit silent beside him all day, while his enemies brought accusation after accusation against him to procure his condemnation to death.

He asked the judges towards the end of the trial if he might be allowed the services of some one to take notes for him.

"Any of your servants shall assist you," was the reply, "to write anything you please."

"My wife is here, my lord," he replied, "to do it."

And a thrill of admiration and indignant pity passed through the assembly as Lady Rachel rose and took her place by his side, with pen and paper, to write for him.

Lord Russell was condemned.

He had no hope, himself, of pardon, and he was unwilling to plead for a grace which he felt sure would not be accorded. Moreover, being, as he said, a man of few words, he did not wish his last days to contradict the rest of his life. But at the request of his wife and his friends he consented to write a petition for pardon to the king, which she herself placed in the king's hands, kneeling at his feet. Her own father had been the faithful friend of the king's father in his days of adversity.

His own aged father also, the Earl of Bedford, and some of his friends pleaded hard for his life.

And Lady Rachel spared herself no humiliation in pleading for him with his enemies, and left no possible door of hope untried to save him, resolutely keeping her nerve calm and her judgment clear as long as there was anything to be done for him.

One thing he could never be persuaded to do, to save his life. He would not say a word in his petitions or remonstrances which implied that he had swerved from those endeavours to preserve the freedom of his country which he believed to have been right. And to this, whatever his friends might do, his wife never tried to persuade him.

But there was no mercy for him, neither pardon nor reprieve, nor any commutation of his sentence.

And at length, relieved by the failure of hopes which he had never shared from the necessity of making any more efforts to save himself, he set his

face steadfastly to meet death, and that judgment beyond death whose justice, he knew, can never fail.

The wife sat beside him through the reading of the terrible sentence of death, and left the court by his side, never for a moment displaying her own anguish, lest she should add to his.

As to the justice of the sentence, it can only here be said that the things he contended for were afterwards all obtained for the country, and that the king who reigned soon after the king who signed his sentence, raised Lord William Russell's father a step in the peerage, chiefly, he said, in honour of the virtue and patriotism of his son.

What I have to speak of to you is, not the political bearings of the life or death, but the nobleness of this living and dying, and the share his wife had in sustaining him through both.

He had lived with her "fourteen years," as he wrote, "the happiest and contentedest man in the world."

Two days before the day fixed for his execution, Lord Cavendish, one of his friends, sent to the prison to offer to change clothes with him and remain in prison while he escaped; for which generous offer he, in a smiling way, sent his thanks, but said he would make no escape. He would not risk his friend's safety, nor falsely confess himself guilty by flight.

That day his conversation was calm and cheerful as usual, and ranged over the politics of Europe and all the great matters which had occupied his

mind. Only when he spoke of his wife the tears would come into his eyes, and he would suddenly change the discourse, not daring to trust his feelings. Once he said he wished she would cease "beating every bush" for his preservation; but when he considered that it might mitigate her sorrow afterwards to reflect that she had left nothing undone, he acquiesced.

He expressed great joy in the magnanimity of spirit he saw in her, and said the parting with her was the greatest thing he had to do; for he was afraid she would hardly be able to bear it. While he lived, the concern for preserving him filled her mind; but when that should be over, he feared the quickness of her feelings would be too much for her.

The next day, the day before his death, he kept as a sacred day. Early in the morning he partook of the sacrament, the Last Supper of our Lord Jesus, which He has perpetuated for us as a memorial of His death, and a communication of His living presence.

Then he was asked if he forgave all.

"I do," he replied, "from my heart."

He could not pretend to high joy and longings, he said, but he had entire resignation of himself to the will of God, and perfect serenity of mind. He said he grieved at the cloud which seemed to be over his country; but he hoped his death would do more service than his life could have done.

After the midday meal he saw a few of his friends.

He spent most of the afternoon in devotion.

Towards evening his friends came, and he took leave of them with a grave cheerfulness.

Then his three little children were brought to him. Fondly as he loved them, he spoke to them with cheerfulness, and in a way fitted to their years, so as to leave no bitter memory on their hearts. The little ones left, but the wife remained with him. She stayed with him all the day.

“Stay and sup with me,” he said to her just before supper; “let us eat our last earthly food together.”

He talked cheerfully at supper, speaking of his children, and especially of his two daughters, with a gaiety which made those who knew the depth of his tenderness wonder. He spoke also with a lofty liberty of spirit of the last hours of some dying men.

When one more vain project for his preservation was brought to his wife, he made gentle pleasantry about it. And when the darkness came, and the rain beat on the windows, he said—

“Such a rain to-morrow will spoil a great show, which is a dull thing on a rainy day.”

At last, that last day, so long, and yet, to those two who loved each other, so terribly brief, came to an end.

At eleven o’clock they parted, with the last kisses, but without sobs or tears.

The sorrow was too deep to be relieved by weeping, and they were sustained by still having each other to sustain.

They parted in silence.

When she was gone he said—

“ Now the bitterness of death is past.”

And then, man of few words as he was, he ran out into a long discourse concerning her, saying how great a blessing she had been to him, and what a misery it would have been to him, if she had not had such magnanimity of spirit joined to her tenderness as never to have desired him to do a base thing to save his life.

And again, after speaking of other things, he returned to speak of her.

He spoke of the good providence of God in giving him such a wife, with birth, fortune, great understanding, great religion, and great kindness to him ; “ but her carriage in this extremity,” he said, “ was beyond all.” A great comfort it was, he said, to leave his children to such a mother’s hands, and that she had promised to take care of herself for their sakes.

And then, before he went to rest, his thoughts turned to death.

How great a change, he said, death would make, and how wonderfully those new scenes (of another life) would strike upon the soul. He had heard how some that had been born blind were struck when, by the couching of a cataract on the eye, they saw ; *but what, he said, if the first thing they saw were the sun rising ?*

At midnight he went to bed, and when they called him, as he had desired, at four o’clock, he was sleeping as quietly as ever in his life.

His first thoughts on waking were of his wife, and he sent the friend who came to him to tell her he was well and had slept well, and hoped she had done so.

He dressed quietly, and thanked God he felt no sort of fear or hurry in his thoughts.

After leaving his room he went back into it often to pray alone.

And from one of these solitudes of prayer, he came out with a grave joy in his countenance, and said he had been inspired in this last prayer, and he wished he could have written it down and sent it to his wife.

He gave Bishop Burnet, his friend, messages to his relations, but above all that they should not avenge his death.

Then he wound up his watch and said to the bishop, "I have done with time: now eternity comes."

To his closest and dearest friend, Lord Cavendish, he gave as his farewell an entreaty to apply more to religion, saying how it sustained him now in his utmost need.

They drove him through the great city of London to Lincoln's Inn Fields, where he was to die. Great crowds had gathered to see him pass. In many eyes he saw tears, which moved him much.

The rain was falling, and he said to his companions, "This rain may hurt you that are bare-headed."

Then he said he grieved at the cloud which

seemed to be over the country, but he trusted his death would do more service than his life would have done.

The tears came into his eyes once, as he looked up, in passing, at the windows of Southampton House, where he had lived with his wife.

On his way he sang softly to himself part of the 119th Psalm. "I shall sing better soon," he said.

On the scaffold he prayed three or four minutes silently, and then without trembling laid his head down to be severed by the executioner's axe, and gave up his spirit to God.

The devoted wife survived him thirty-six years, living, as she promised him, for her children, and for the many dependent on her.

But the parting was indeed more truly death to her who seemed to live, than to him.

"To have lived with such a friend," she wrote, "how few can glory in the like happiness, or lament the like loss!" And yet she tries to remember "how much it was to have such a love to lose!"

"I have deserved my sorrow; I will be silent under it," she said. "But yet secretly my heart mourns too sadly, I fear, and cannot be comforted, because I have not the dear companion and sharer of all my joys and sorrows. I want him to talk with, to walk with, to eat and sleep with. All these things are irksome to me now; the day unwelcome, and the night so too. When I see my children before me, I remember the pleasure he took in them. This makes my heart shrink. Yet can I regret his

quitting a lesser good for a bigger? And when I have done the remnant of work appointed me on earth, then I may joyfully wait for the heavenly perfection in God's good time; I may enter the same place of rest where he is gone for whom I grieve."

For a long time after his death all seemed dead to her, and the first thing that woke her benumbed heart again to sorrow, and hope, and rejoice, was the dangerous illness, and then the recovery, of her only son.

"He has been ill," she wrote of the child, "and God has let me see the folly of my imaginations, which made me apt to conclude I had nothing left, the deprivation of which could be matter of much anguish, or its possession of any considerable refreshment.

"I have felt the falseness of the first notion, for I know not how to part with tolerable ease from the little creature. I desire that my thankfulness for the real blessing of these children may refresh my labouring, weary mind, at least, in my endeavours to do the part towards them their dear and tender father would not have omitted.

"When I have done this piece of duty to my best friend and to them, how gladly would I lie down by that beloved dust I lately went to visit."

The blank of his loss was never filled, but more and more to her it became a door into the heavenly world whither her faith followed him; more and more her heart was drawn up in love to the God and Saviour to whom he had gone.

And by degrees the love she had for her husband, living and dying, and living immortally, instead of absorbing her heart from others, opened it in tender sympathy with all she could comfort or succour. Weeping with those who weep came first; but then also, as the joy she believed he had entered brightened on her faith, came the power of rejoicing with those that rejoice.

Her warm heart met with returns of affection and gratitude. She says of her sister: "She was a delicious friend; I loved her with too much passion." And in old age, towards the close of life, she writes that she counted it "the biggest blessing to love and be beloved by those she loved and respected."

Her children were well married. She survived her daughters and her son. But at last she also was called to lay down the life whose duties she had fulfilled so steadfastly; and she also learned, like her husband, what it is to have the spiritual sight couched of the "cataract" of the flesh, and to see, for the first vision of the opened eyes, the Light of the world.

I have given you this sketch of her life, not because it is exceptional, except in its one great tragic sorrow, but because that great sorrow reveals what a true Christian wife can always be: the most faithful counsellor and the dearest companion of her husband, one with him in work and thought, in faith and prayer; in the little world of home; in the great world of the nation; in life and in death.

MADAME ELIZABETH OF FRANCE.

THE picture I bring before you next is, like the last, one of strong contrasts of light and shade. It is the sketch of one who was never wife or mother, never claimed or possessed the first place in any human heart, who shines before us a type of absolutely unselfish love, the maiden sister and aunt, living in and for others, finding her joy in their joys, her interest in all that interested those dear to her.

Madame Elizabeth of France was born at Versailles, in one of the most magnificent palaces in the world, of a race of kings to whom the greatest nobles in the kingdom thought it an honour to render the humblest services. To see one of her family for a few minutes was a festival looked forward to for weeks; to be spoken to was an honour to be handed down to posterity. Her spirit was naturally as high as her birth, and in her childhood she was impetuous, quick-tempered, self-willed, and difficult to control.

Her own father and mother, both of good and high character, died early. But a wise governess, to whose care she was entrusted, early won the affections of the sensitive child, by a combination of gentleness and firmness, so that a change of manner which showed she was grieved was punish-

ment enough ; and the little princess learned early the first lessons of the self-control she needed so much in the trials of her later life.

There were three brothers and four sisters in the family, and they grew up amongst the magnificent palaces and gardens and forests of their fathers, attached to each other ; but always approached with homage as beings of a superior order, and accustomed to look on the rest of the world as born to serve them.

Unhappily, the two last kings of their house, corrupted by despotic power, had been men of a most licentious life. The luxury of the court was excessive, and its morals were very low, whilst at the same time great numbers of the nation over which they reigned were plunged in the most abject ignorance and destitution.

But of this the young princess, in her sheltered and luxurious childhood, knew nothing. The world to her was a place of palaces and paradises, created for her family, and of friends and courtiers who adored them and spared their splendour ; whilst outside, far below, swarmed a multitude of poor toiling men and women, with whom they only came in contact as the servants of their household, or as “the poor” to be relieved by their bounty, and to repay it by unlimited gratitude.

The great affection of the Princess Elizabeth's life was for her brother, who afterwards became King Louis XVI. Outside her family she had a few friendships for the noble ladies of the court.

Louis married early a beautiful young Austrian princess, Marie Antoinette. She was only fifteen when she came to France. Amidst the corrupt court the young royal pair lived a pure and simple life; and when at last the licentious old king, their grandfather, died in agonies, of small-pox, and the courtiers, "with a rush like thunder," left the ante-chambers of the dead for those of the new monarch, it is said that the young Louis and Marie Antoinette, now become king and queen, fell on their knees in prayer and cried, "O God, have mercy on us, and lead us, for we are young to reign."

They only thought of the wisdom needed to reign over a loyal nation; they knew nothing of the tempest of discontent gathering over them. Indeed, there were no signs visible to them to warn them.

They were indeed young.

When their first child was born, some years after their marriage, all the nation, and especially the city of Paris, went into an ecstasy of joy.

The mechanics of all trades marched to the palace in a festive procession. The market-women, according to an ancient custom, came to the bedside of the young mother to see the royal child, and made loyal speeches full of enthusiastic loyalty and unselfish sympathy. The joys of the young king and queen seemed to be, and indeed in a sense were, the joy of the whole people.

And so the young husband and wife, and their

young sister, the Princess Elizabeth, passed the swift days in the sunshine of every kind of delight, living in a paradise of innocent festivities.

The queen loved to escape from the stately ceremonial of the court to a little country house, where she and her young sister entertained their friends by riding and boating parties, just as any other ladies might, while the king entered into their simple amusements. They enjoyed riding in the woods, fishing in the lakes, rambles in the pleasant, quiet gardens, acting little dramas in the house.

Later, Madame Elizabeth had a pleasant house and farm of her own at Montreuil, where she had poultry and cows, that she might give fresh eggs and milk to all the sick people in the village. The dairyman was a young Swiss from the mountains, and the princess interested herself in his happiness, and brought his old mother and father, and sent for his young betrothed from Switzerland to make them a happy home together.

Happily for herself, Madame Elizabeth, though she knew so little of the whirlpool of crime and misery on the edge of which this graceful idyllic life was lived, was linked by her faith to a Life which penetrates to the depths of all human misery and sin. From her early years the devotion of her heart and the obedience of her will were given to the Saviour who redeemed the world through the agony and shame of the cross, and on the cross forgave His torturers, and who demands

of His disciples to be ready in their turn to endure any anguish and forgive any wrong. The power of His cross and the likeness of His love were manifest in her wonderfully all through her life. She was trained for her last steps of suffering, not by previous suffering, but by an habitual setting aside of self, taking the lowest place, and living in and for others all through her bright days.

There are many letters left, written by her in the years of her royal state, and through them all, varied as they are, one characteristic shines. Varied as they are, some playful, with a gaiety as fresh as a child's, some enthusiastic in friendship, some earnestly religious, she is occupied throughout, not with any plans or hopes, or sorrows, or joys of her own, but with the distresses, the successes, the pleasures, and interests of those around her.

In some letters her whole heart bubbles over in a mirthful delight in the little children of her friend Madame de Bombelles; in others it is the happiness of her Swiss dairyman and his bride; in another it is the health of her friend which engrosses her: much as she longs for her presence, nothing must be risked for her pleasure. In another it is a tender, half-playful winning and alluring a younger friend of an impetuous character to a higher life.

Through all you feel the freedom of a heart abandoned to the highest Will, inspired by the infinite Love; free to sway with any breeze, because so firmly anchored; ready, as a matter of course, like

a soldier, for any sacrifice. And then as the storm gathers, and she begins to enter into the terrible shadow, knowing so little how it was to deepen, it is still not her own share in the humiliations which occupies her, but her brother's, the king's, the queen's, and their children. Herself in the full beat of the tempest, she writes to those who have escaped into other countries, to cheer them for the little inconveniences and trials of exile.

And so, unconsciously, like all the truest, she shines before us an example how no conscious anticipation prepares for the great conflicts like the daily habit of sacrificing self to others, and that what we call heroism is not the sudden spring to some exceptional height, but the natural last step of a daily life of self-sacrifice.

Even to analyze thus such a life seems to rub off the bloom of its beauty. Madame Elizabeth was not thinking of self-sacrifice. She was thinking of her brother, his wife, her little niece and nephew, her friends, her dairyman, and living for them. She was simply satisfied with the rule of her God, content with His will rather than her own.

But all the time the fearful tempest was increasing. It is not possible to speak here of its causes. Storms necessarily are the results from many conflicting currents. However suddenly they burst, they have usually been long preparing.

In France at that time there had been cruelty, selfish luxury, among the few rich; penury, ignorance, among the many poor; and then at last

the many suddenly waking to feel they were the majority, and being the majority, if united, were the stronger, and strong enough to avenge the wrongs of centuries; a blind passion of envy and retaliation, with a confused sense that all the powers which had been above them had been weights keeping them down, which must be tossed away and shattered in pieces.

The royal family had been the source of all power. They became the centre of the attack. The former kings had been arbitrary, licentious, selfish; the present king, Louis XVI., was gentle, pure in life, and full of kindness. But nothing availed to save him. Kings had offended. He was the king, and as king, he had to suffer.

On Tuesday, May 25th, 1789, the little romance of Madame Elizabeth's Swiss dairymen was crowned by the arrival of his young betrothed from Switzerland, by their marriage in the church of Montreuil, and their beginning their home life in the pleasant little house the princess had prepared for them near the dairy. The marriage and home-coming made quite a festival in the little town. It was, as it were, the last scene of the idyl of the royal life.

Two months afterwards the tragedy began.

On Sunday evening, July 12th, 1789, the people of Paris rose, besieged, took and destroyed the great state prison of the Bastille, and soon afterwards dragged Foulon, the comptroller-general of taxes, from a hiding-place, and finally suspended

him to a lamp-post amidst the angry mocking of thousands. The thousands, alas ! were pining with famine. It was reported that Foulon had said contemptuously, " If the mob cannot get bread they may eat hay." The mob put a bunch of hay between the lips of the murdered man.

Still, immediately around the king and queen, in the palace of Versailles, four miles from Paris, were a band of faithful soldiers, many of them Swiss, whose loyal demonstrations reassured the queen. But Madame Elizabeth, with the clear sight of the heart purged from all self-seeking, estimated the danger more truly. She counselled either vigorous resistance, or the withdrawal of the royal family to a distant province far from Paris.

The king hesitated, the queen was sanguine. Madame Elizabeth's counsels were disregarded. Meantime the mob of Paris grew more and more excited and revolutionary, until one day they surged up from the lowest quarters and out of the gates of the city along the four miles of road which led to Versailles, and there thronged the courts of the palace, insisting on the king's coming back with them. Once more Madame Elizabeth entreated her brother to stand firm, and to refuse to trust himself to the rebellious city. But again in vain. Decisive action was not taken ; the moment of possible salvation passed. And then, without hesitation or reproach, the princess took her place beside her brother and sister in the peril, to support them every step of the way, which was to be

for them, although they knew it not, the way to death. That mournful way began by the king and queen consenting to be escorted by the mob of Paris to the tumultuous city.

The king and the queen, Madame Elizabeth, the king's children, and one lady-in-waiting, were in one carriage. Before and behind and on each side were a wild mob, some armed with bayoneted pikes, which were stuck loaves of bread, to signify that the people were starving and would have food at any cost; others carried pikes on which were stuck the heads of some of the massacred royal guard and servants, signifying terribly *from whom at what cost* they would wring this food.

They drove slowly. They left the palace at 2 a.m. at half-past one; they did not reach the Tuileries in Paris till half-past ten at night. At the time, mingled with the few faithful guards, who were powerless to defend them, were the tumultuous thousands, many of them drunk with wine, and frantic with excitement, pressing close to the carriage windows.

Occasionally indeed there were shouts of "Long live the king!" and even of "Long live the queen!" but the prevailing cries were "Long live the nation!" mingled with terrible sanguinary menaces, such as "The bishops to the lamp-posts to be hanged with muttered curses on the "Austrian" women by which they meant the queen, and with the noise of guns fired at random in a frantic way.

The king and the queen occasionally leant

ward and assured the people that they had been misrepresented, that they were indeed true friends of the people.

Madame Elizabeth said little. Her countenance showed no trouble. She was chiefly occupied with her little nephew and niece, who were, it is said, more surprised than frightened. Puzzled at the novelty, the idea of danger had not entered their minds.

As they passed in sight of the trees of her pleasant home at Montreuil, with its Swiss dairy, the dwelling of her happy dairyman and his bride, she bent forward to look towards it.

“ My sister, you are greeting Montreuil,” said the king.

“ Sire ! ” she replied, “ I am bidding it adieu.”

Would you know the hidden spring of her peace and courage ? There is a little prayer in her own handwriting, written about this time, in which she prays that her heart may become like the adorable heart of Jesus, sanctuary of the love which moved God to become man, and to sacrifice Himself for us. “ In gratitude for Thy love, I offer Thee my heart, all that I possess, all that I am, all I shall do, all I shall suffer. Thou art my consolation in griefs, the remedy for my evil, my strength and refuge in temptation, my hope in life, my asylum in death.”

This was the tabernacle in which her spirit dwelt amidst the storm.

Outwardly all that was seen was a young, gentle

woman—she was not then more than five and twenty—quieting the little puzzled children. Inwardly it was the martyr-spirit obedient to all, even to death, consciously and freely 'saying adieu to all she treasured on earth.

There were illuminations in Paris when they arrived, and something of a wild triumph of welcome, which at moments seems to have given hope to the king and the queen; but never to Madame Elizabeth.

It was October. The chill of the autumnal evenings had begun. The palace to which they were taken, the Tuilleries, was cold as a prison, which indeed to them it was. It had not been royally inhabited for two hundred years. The rich tapestries on the wall were faded and torn, the furniture was mouldy, the doors would scarcely shut. The windows of Madame Elizabeth's apartments were so close to the street that the royal children could not appear at them without the risk of being received by coarse revolutionary songs, and some rough market-women once sprang up through them into her room. And yet even these rough women held the princess in a kind of veneration, and called her the St. Geneviève, the patron saint of the Tuilleries.

The royal family settled themselves into this harassed life with courage and dignity, to make such a home-life as they could for the children. The queen and Madame Elizabeth gave lessons to the little princess Marie Thérèse, only daughter

of the house. Themselves, they could not bear to read. The volume of history actually opening before their eyes was too full of ominous changes and terrible realities for them to turn their minds from it to any story or history of the past.

But the royal sisters spent hours quietly together with their needles, making a tapestry carpet.

For nearly three years the royal family, that little affectionate home circle which had been the centre of the nation, lived on thus at the Tuileries, occasionally spending some weeks at the neighbouring country palace of St. Cloud.

Now and then there were broken gleams as of returning loyalty. The people, touched by some fresh concession, or merely perhaps by the sight of the gentle king, his saintly sister, and the beautiful young queen and the little children, would at times greet them with welcomes and acclamations, and even with sobs and tears.

The king, great in passive endurance, but feeble in action, seems to have borne everything tranquilly, without looking much to the future. The queen, sometimes plunged in depths of despondency, was sometimes lifted up by hope, either that the people would return like prodigal children to the good king, or that her own Austrian imperial family would intervene and save them.

Madame Elizabeth seems to have faced the danger more continuously. She always feared that the queen, hated and misrepresented as she was, and a foreigner, would be a victim to the fury

of the revolution, and this fear doubled her tenderness and devoted consideration.

She stood like a Cassandra, whose eyes were illumined to see facts as they are, and therefore in a measure to foresee the future.

She often felt mournfully that the king, and queen were blind. "Oh that the king would *be* the king!" she said. She saw the queen misunderstanding the French people, and unintentionally irritating them; and she could neither make those so dear to her see what she saw, nor do what she felt to be right and wise, neither flee to a safe refuge, nor resolutely rise to resist their enemies or die.

She saw the king, at Versailles, yielding when he could, she believed, have effectually resisted; and then, months afterwards, the whole royal family, endeavouring to fly from the city when flight was too late, were followed and recaptured in their disguises, and brought back, baffled and humiliated, to the angry, triumphant city.

And yet she never for a moment detached herself in self-justification from them, sharing all the bitter consequences of the course of action she had warned them against, without a murmur or a reproach; generous, tender, comforting, and cheering every one around her; welcoming every gleam of sunshine, accepting every blow and buffet. For deep in her heart burned, as she had prayed, the love and patience of Him who suffered and conquered on the cross. Daily she pursued her regu-

lated life of work and prayer and charity, present daily at the Holy Eucharist, the feast at which our Lord continues to us His presence always.

She resolutely refused to allow any of her friends to return, as they wished, and share her perils. She could herself have escaped ; her aunts had fled to Rome, and were in safe refuge there, and she was entreated to follow them ; but she never for a moment entertained the thought of abandoning her brother in his humiliation. "There are positions," she wrote, "in which one cannot dispose of one's self, and such is mine. The line which I have to follow is traced so clearly for me by Providence, that I must abide in it."

And so the terrible tragedy went on, a tragedy so much deeper than any one acting in it could understand ! The innocent king suffering for the sins of his fathers ; the blind and suffering people avenging the wrongs of their fathers on the guiltless son of their oppressors. And the Divine Christ, King of kings and Sufferer of sufferers, as we believe, working out in the suffering king and his sister the likeness of His own divine forgiving patience, and working out of the blind vengeance of the people a possible opening into a better life for all.

Prerogative after prerogative, and title after title, were stripped from the captive king. He was no more to be called Sire or Majesty, which moved him little ; but he felt most bitterly the taking away of his royal right to pardon.

“They have robbed him of liberty,” said Madame Elizabeth, “and now they rob him of mercy.”

At last the populace, surging up from the lowest quarters of the city, determined to attack the palace of the Tuilleries itself. They approached it in three divisions, armed.

It was on the 20th of June, 1792.

Six thousand of the people forced their way into a great hall of the palace, surrounded the king, and placed the red cap of liberty on his head, demanding his consent to all the new laws they had been making.

Madame Elizabeth heard the tumult, and came down to place herself beside her brother. They mistook her for the queen, whom they hated.

“You do not understand,” one kindly disposed said to her. “They take you for the Austrian.”

“Would to God they may,” she replied. “Do not undeceive them! Spare them a greater crime.”

And gently turning aside a bayonet, which all but touched her breast, “Take care, sir,” she said quietly; “you might wound some one, and I am sure you would be sorry.”

With great difficulty she had just pressed through the crowd to her brother, when a man near her fell fainting at the tumult and at the perils which surrounded the king. Seeing him without help, the princess succeeded in reaching him, made him breathe some salts, and recalled him to life.

This royal courage and courtesy and womanly

pity in a young princess, herself at the moment surrounded with threatening pikes and knives, touched the hearts of all around.

The king remained firm. Gentle as he was, he would not yield to violence the sanction to laws he had refused to pass. More moderate men came in, and for the moment the mob were baffled and dispersed.

But it was only a pause. The revolution came steadily on.

One after another the friends of the royal family were put to death or driven away.

Power descended lower and lower, to men of more rigid theory or more violent passion.

Hope of earthly deliverance more and more vanished. Madame Elizabeth, it is said, prayed thenceforth not for change of circumstances, but for change of heart, in all she loved; for resignation, not for safety.

The circle of enemies gathered closer and closer around the victim family.

On the night of the 9th of August, 1792, the palace of the Tuilleries was besieged. No one slept in it that night. Without, the furious mob swarmed, drums beat, cannon fired, the alarm-bell sounded. Within, the faithful guards gathered round the royal family, ready to die for them or with them. The queen took her children from their beds, and had them dressed, and with Madame Elizabeth passed from them to the soldiers, encouraging all.

“Long live the king of our fathers ! ” said the young men. “Long live the king of our children ! ” cried the old men, raising the boy-dauphin in their arms.

The king went out to encourage their defenders in the courts and gardens, but there he was coldly received.

At last the fatal advice was given by one of the most faithful of their guards to quit the palace, and trust themselves to the nation in the National Assembly.

“Can you answer for the life of the king and the queen ? ” said Madame Elizabeth to one of the bravest of the soldiers.

“Madame,” was the reply, “we can promise to die by their side ; we can promise no more.”

And so on that summer morning the little company went forth from the palace gates, never to return.

Insults met them on the short way between the palace and the Salle de Manége, where the Assembly met ; cries of “Down with the tyrant ! —death ! ”

The king walked first, alone ; the queen followed, holding the hand of her little son of six years old ; Madame Elizabeth led the little princess, her niece. The king was calm, but his face was troubled ; the queen was in tears, which she vainly tried to check and wipe away, she was quivering with emotion ; the little prince was much frightened ; the little girl wept softly. “Madame Elizabeth

was the calmest," said a lady who was with them. "She was resigned to all. It was religion which inspired her." She said to this lady, looking on the ferocious people who were insulting and threatening them, "All these poor people are led astray. I long for their conversion, but not for their punishment."

It was the old divine word of forgiveness, "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do," flowing from the abundance of a heart made, as she prayed, like that of Christ. Not only "I forgive," but "Father, forgive;" not only "I forgive," but "Do thou bless."

The faithful guards were massacred; and all that those who wished them best could do for the fallen royal family was to have them securely placed in a prison, there to await the end.

Madame Elizabeth was lodged in what had been a kitchen. She took the young Pauline de Tourzel, daughter of one of the ladies of the court, to sleep on a bed beside her. Poor Pauline had only one dress to wear. Madame Elizabeth gave her one of her own, working busily with the queen to take it to pieces and sew it together again, so as to fit the different height of the young girl.

But they had no time to finish altering the dress; all their lady attendants were taken from them and thrown into another prison, and the royal family were left alone, with the exception of Cléry, the valet of the king.

In the close prison rooms illness was added to

their other troubles. Poor Clèry was the last attacked, and the royal family waited on him with grateful and tender care.

Two of the prison attendants, who had begun by being very harsh, and had acted as spies, were won by their patience and gentleness to be their friends.

Yet while the little devotedly attached family were still left together, they had a happiness in each other which could not be destroyed.

Poor and destitute as they had become, the queen and the Princess Elizabeth worked cheerfully on into the night, mending the clothes of the king and of the royal children.

The ladies rose at six, and helped each other to dress, gradually teaching the little Princess Marie Thérèse to do without assistance.

At ten the family assembled. The king gave lessons to his son in geography, French, and Latin; the queen taught her little daughter; and Madame Elizabeth gave the little girl lessons in arithmetic and drawing.

They were allowed a little walk in the prison garden, when the children used to play at ball or quoits.

In the afternoon there was recreation. Madame Elizabeth would often persuade the king to leave off reading to play at trictrac or piquet, whilst the gaiety of the children often brought them a ray of sunshine.

At seven in the evening, the queen and Madame Elizabeth read aloud some history or story for the

children. After supper, the king sometimes amused the children with riddles from some old newspapers which they had discovered. The news of the day were concealed from them, and only to be obtained by much ingenuity.

They were constantly watched by the officers of the prison, and had no certainty of being alone.

On one occasion the one faithful servant still permitted them happened to enter Madame Elizabeth's room whilst she was at prayer. He would have retired, but she told him he would not disturb her. And afterwards she allowed him to write down the prayer she was saying. I will copy it, for it is one of our precious glimpses into the secret of her strength :

“What will happen to me to-day, my God, I know not. All I know is that nothing will happen which Thou hast not foreseen. That is enough, my God, to make me tranquil. I adore Thine eternal purpose. I submit to it with all my heart. I make to Thee a sacrifice of all. I unite this sacrifice to that of Thy dear Son, my Saviour.”

But this comparatively tranquil pause of waiting was soon over. Once or twice they were agitated by hopes of escape.

But they would not leave the children, nor any of them escape alone; and so these well-meant schemes failed, and necessarily tended to increase the suspicious watchfulness of their gaolers.

The slow torture of those last days went on increasing. Royalty was abolished. The king was

to be called henceforth Louis Capet. He was the first summoned before the Revolutionary Tribunal.

During his trial there, he was separated from his family. It ended in his being condemned to death. He was allowed to see his wife and sister and children once more before they were separated for ever.

The moment before he had to part from them for the last time, the king made all the family promise solemnly never to avenge his death; and taking his little son of eight years old on his knees, he made him lift his hand and swear that he would keep and obey this last will of his father.

Then restraining his own feelings for their sakes, he went silently away, leaving them in an agony of tears.

The next morning the wife and sister, with the children, knelt together with hands clasped in prayer, listening to the sound of the carriage wheels which bore him away, and then to the terrible silence which followed the fallen king through the streets of his capital to the scaffold, until at last the roar of the cannon announced that all was over, and the king was dead.

The queen and princess had to beg for mourning dresses to wear in memory of the king, from those who had murdered him.

The queen said soon afterwards to Madame Elizabeth, "I may not always have given the king the counsels which might have saved him. But I shall rejoin him on the scaffold. I also shall soon mount there."

The next step in their way of sorrow was the separation from the little prince, who was torn from their loving care to be under the tyranny of a cruel gaoler, worse than death.

After stooping to make vain entreaties, the queen had to submit, and as he was taken from her, she said to the boy—

“Remember your duties to God. Remember your mother and your aunt and your sister, who love you. Be good, patient, and true, and your father will bless you from heaven.”

They were never allowed to speak to the child again.

Thus the two ladies and the little girl alone remained. The mother and aunt went on quietly with her education, Madame Elizabeth teaching her writing and geography. And daily from both of them she learned the great Christian lesson, to forgive.

Madame Elizabeth, as usual, was the comforter. “My sister,” she said, “let us not ask *why* God chastens us. We cannot be heirs with Christ without partaking of His sufferings. Let us willingly commit ourselves into His hands.”

Then, next, the queen herself was summoned before the dreadful lawless tribunal which had set itself above all law; and she also went forth from the prison into the dark unknown, never to be spoken to on earth by sister or child any more.

She, the foreign princess, beautiful, widowed, and still young, was assailed with cruel, false accusa-

tions, condemned, dragged to the scaffold in a common cart, and beheaded.

But the sister and the little daughter were never told what had become of her, not even whether she were living or dead.

The days of the two now left so forlorn were passed in an unchanging monotony, only varied with new petty insults.

Coarse linen was given to them instead of fine; coarse common food instead of the fare they had been used to.

For herself, Madame Elizabeth had a kind of high pleasure in these privations. They seemed to her but as visible footprints of the crucified Lord she followed.

“It is the bread of the poor,” she said, when the first of these poor coarse meals was brought to them. “We too are poor. How many unfortunate ones have less of it than we!”

But she felt keenly for her little niece, and to her she said—

“Remember, my child, what your father said to you the day before your first Communion. ‘Religion,’ he told you, ‘is the source of happiness, and sustains us in adversity; believe not that you are secure against trouble. You know not, my daughter, for what Providence destines you.’”

One day she took two tresses of the king’s and the queen’s hair, which she used to carry about her in a piece of paper, added to these one of her own, and gave them all to her niece. “Keep,” she said,

"my child, these sad souvenirs. It is the only heritage that your father and mother who have so loved you, and I also, who love you so tenderly, can leave you. They have taken from me paper, pens, and ink. I can leave you nothing in writing. My dear child, keep in your heart the consolations I have given you. More than the books we lack, they will lift your soul to God. He tries us because He loves us. He teaches us the nothingness of greatness. Ah! my child," she said, weeping and pressing the little girl in her arms, "God alone is true ; God alone is great."

Around that monotonous and silent prison, day and night, the wretched city was kept in fearful excitement by the continual massacres and murders of what is called the Reign of Terror. Great numbers of men and women of rank were in prison at once, merely for being of noble birth.

At length the turn of Madame Elizabeth herself came.

She also was brought before the Revolutionary Tribunal, with twenty-four other accused persons.

"What is your name ?" they asked.

"Marie Elizabeth of France," she replied ; "sister of Louis XVI. and aunt of Louis XVII., your king."

The king, Louis XVII., alas ! was the poor little oppressed child in the prison.

As always, thinking of saving others, and not of herself, during her own trial she saved the life of one of the ladies condemned with her, by telling

the judges that this lady was pregnant. Her execution was thus delayed until after the birth of her child, and before that happened the Reign of Terror was over, and mother and child were saved.

After the sentence, the princess, with the rest of those condemned with her, was taken back to the prison ; not, indeed, to her little orphan niece, whom she was never permitted to see again, but to the Hall of the Last Moments, where, with the twenty-three other condemned, for twenty-four hours she awaited death.

This hall was a long, narrow, dark chamber, whose only furniture was a number of wooden benches ranged against the wall.

The same gentle, loving, patient being as ever, not different, but the same, occupied with others, as always, entering into all that moved or interested them, she succeeded in inspiring her fellow-sufferers with the courage and faith and hope which were so strong in her own heart.

To one, M. de Loménie, indignant that even the popularity which his patriotic services had procured him was imputed to him as a crime, she said—

“ You have shown your fellow-countrymen how to do well. You will show them now how a man with a conscience at peace can die.”

Among the twenty-four condemned were a mother and a young son. The mother said, sobbing—

“ I am willing enough to die myself, but I cannot see him die ! ”

“ You love your son ! ” said the princess, “ and

you would not have him accompany you from the troubles of earth to the joys of heaven?"

At her words the heart of the poor mother opened itself to a ray of joy; her tears began to flow quietly, and pressing her son in her arms, she said—

"Come, come! we will mount on high together."

Another of the ladies, the Marquise de Crussol d'Amboise, had been of a character so timid that she used to tremble at the sight of a spider, and would never sleep at night without two waiting-maids in her room to protect her. The example of Madame Elizabeth transformed her. She was quite calm at the tribunal, in the prison, at her death.

"They do not ask of us, as of the ancient martyrs," said the princess, "the sacrifice of our faith, but only of our miserable lives. Let us make this sacrifice to God with resignation."

At last the prison doors were opened, the executioners' carts, called "the biers of the living," were there outside, and one by one the condemned went up into them.

On their way through the streets, the kerchief which covered the princess's head fell off, and the hands bound together could not replace it, and so it happened that she could be clearly distinguished from the rest, and many, recognizing her, observed the serenity of her countenance.

She was rejoicing with the joy of sustaining the last steps of her companions.

At the foot of the scaffold was a bench where the condemned were to sit, while one by one their fellow-sufferers were summoned up to die.

The timid Marquise de Crussol was the first called, Madame Elizabeth the last.

The marquise bent before the princess, testifying her respect and love, and asking to be permitted to embrace her.

“Most willingly, and with all my heart,” she said.

And all these dying women went up to the scaffold strengthened by her kiss.

Many had already been beheaded, when a man of the dregs of the populace, with words of insult, compared the demeanour of the princess with that of the queen, her sister-in-law, on the scaffold.

It was the first tidings Madame Elizabeth had of her sister’s death. All the time of the executions she kept repeating the *De Profundis* for those who died, the Psalm, “Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee.” And also she said her own daily prayer (that prayer so wonderfully granted) that her heart might be patient and loving as the heart of Christ.

When the twenty-third victim passed before her, bowing reverently to her like the rest, she said to him, “Courage, and faith in the mercy of God!”

And then, at last, with a firm step she mounted the scaffold, and looking towards heaven gave herself up to the executioner.

The kerchief which covered her neck fell off at the moment that she touched the fatal plank.

“In the name of your mother, monsieur,” she said to the executioner, “cover me.”

These were her last words.

No execution had been watched with such emotion. There were none of the terrible customary cries of “Vive la Republique!” Every one went sadly to his home.

She was one of the last victims of the Reign of Terror.

And so for ever the beautiful, loving, saintly being shines before us, with the likeness of the Saviour stamped on her inmost heart, in the commonest steps of her every-day life. Most exceptional indeed she is in her sufferings and her heroic endurance. But I bring her before you not on account of what is exceptional in her, but because these surpassing and uncommon fires of trial reveal to us a character, thank God, not unique among us, of the sister, the aunt, and the friend ; never first with any one, always gloriously and willingly second ; not thinking what others felt for her, or what she felt for them, but caring for the people themselves ; not ministered unto, but ministering, from the happy girlhood in which she brightened life for all around her, to the scaffold where she helped her fellow-sufferers to die.

THE MOTHER OF THE WESLEY'S.

I HAVE been intending to bring before you a picture of a Christian mother; but here my difficulty is in the number of revered and beloved ones who rise before us.

Self-sacrifice, the living in and for their children, is the nature of mothers all the world over, so that to write the history of the love of mothers would be to write the history of the human race, with a few unnatural exceptions.

God, the All-merciful Himself, in speaking of His own love to man, can say nothing further than that it is more, even, than a mother's.

But it is the character of the mother, underneath the love, which makes the love all through life a blessing to her children.

In women of violent, undisciplined character, a mother's love may lead to injustice and even cruelty to others for her children's sake; in weak women a mother's love may be fatal to her children, by false and selfish yielding to their foolish wishes.

The mother's love is always a sacred instinct divinely implanted, but for the maternal instinct to become the strength and blessing it may be to the children, the mother herself must be holy and wise and good.

Amongst you, I believe, wise and good mothers are honoured as among us. And it will be no surprise to you that Madame Lætitia Buonaparte, mother of the great conqueror Napoleon, when her son, on becoming an emperor, half playfully, half gravely offered her his hand to kiss, flung it back to him indignantly, saying, in the presence of his courtiers, "It is your duty to kiss the hand of her who gave you life." Nor will you wonder that when he was vanquished and dethroned, his mother followed him to the little island of Elba where he was exiled. "The child of whom I am most fond," she said, "is always the one who happens to be the most unfortunate."

It is observable how often it has been a widowed mother who has brought up a great man.

Monica was long a widow; Napoleon Buonaparte's mother was widowed for forty-five years; the mother of General Washington, founder of the American United States, was bereaved when her eldest son was eleven years old, and thenceforth managed the property and ruled the family so as to win the gratitude and respect of all. Mrs. Washington used daily to gather her little flock around her to read to them lessons of Christian religion and morality, and her little manual in which she wrote the maxims which guided her was preserved by her son and consulted by him as among his most precious treasures.

About one hundred and seventy years ago there lived, in a quiet country parsonage in England,

a woman who may give as good an idea of what Christian mothers can do as any I can think of.

Her name was Susanna Wesley. She was very beautiful, and was married at nineteen to a country clergyman. She bore him nineteen children. Two of her sons did good work for us all. Charles wrote some of our finest hymns, and John probably did as much as any one Christian man ever did, before or since, to bring hope into hopeless hearts, and to restore sinful men and women to good and holy life.

To the end of her long life her sons, especially John, looked up to her and consulted her as the best friend and wisest counsellor they could have.

I should like to take you for a week into such a home as that of the parsonage at Epworth, where the Wesleys were cradled, that home which was free and happy and full of healthful play as any home in the holidays, and yet orderly and full of healthful work as any school; where the "odious noise" of the crying of children was not suffered, but there was no restraint on their gleeful laughter; to listen to the singing with which the childish voices opened and closed their lessons; to see, at five o'clock in the evening, the eldest child take apart the youngest that could speak, the second the next, and so on, and read together the Psalms for the day, and a chapter from the New Testament; to go through the quiet bedrooms three hours afterwards, and see the rosy, sleeping faces, even the baby of a year old lying

quiet if awake, or only venturing to "cry softly," sure that the mother would come to soothe any real trouble, however little ; and more than all, to watch, unseen, that mother conversing alone, as she did, with one of her little ones every evening, listening to their childish confessions, and giving counsel in their childish perplexities.

This custom of taking each child apart she began after reading the lives of some holy Danish missionaries. She wrote to her husband about this. "I could not forbear spending good part of the evening praising and adoring the Divine goodness for inspiring those men with such ardent zeal for His glory. At last it came into my mind, 'Though I am not a man, nor a minister, yet if my heart were sincerely devoted to God I might do more than I do.' I thought I might pray more for others, and might speak with more warmth of affection to those I converse with. I resolved to begin with my children, in which I observe the following method. I take such a proportion of time as I can spare, every night, to discourse with each child apart. On Monday I talk with Molly, on Tuesday with Hetty, Wednesday with Nancy, Thursday with Jacky (John), Friday with Patty, Saturday with Charles, and with Emily and Sukey together on Sunday."

She had many wise rules, which she kept to steadily, of which her son thus writes :

"She believed self-will to be the root of all sin and misery, and religion to consist in doing the

will of God, and not our own. Therefore she set herself from the first to make her children obedient and submissive, for their own happiness, and that of every one else.

“The noise of fretting and crying was scarcely ever heard in the house. As soon as they could speak, the little ones were taught to say the Lord’s Prayer at rising and at bedtime, then other short collects, a prayer for their parents, and some passages of the Holy Scriptures.

“They were soon made to understand they might have nothing they cried for, and taught to ‘ask prettily’ for what they wanted. They were never suffered to ask the poorest servant for anything without saying courteously, ‘Pray, give me that.’

“Each child was taught the alphabet in one day, the whole morning and evening being given to it for that day.

“No child was ever chidden or beaten twice for the same fault; and if they amended, they were dealt generously with, and never upbraided for it afterwards. Every difficult act of obedience was praised, and if anything was done with the intention to please, though the performance was imperfect, yet the obedience and intention were kindly accepted, and the child with sweetness was directed how to do it better for the future.

“Property was strictly respected, and promises were always required to be kept.”

So deep was the hold that mother had on the hearts of her sons, that in his early manhood she

had tenderly to rebuke John for that “fond wish of his, to die before she died.”

She had nineteen children. Some of these died early, but thirteen of them were living at one time. And thus the pressure of all the endless small cares of poverty was added to the labour of teaching and training those eager, clever children, all of them endued, more or less, with a considerable portion of the will and character of their parents.

The father was unpopular with many on account of his politics, and once, on the pretext of a small debt, was harshly thrown into prison by his enemies. Whilst he was in the prison, his wife sold her rings to provide him with food; while he, worthy of her, read the Church prayers, and preached to his wretched fellow-prisoners, and found the gaol, as he wrote, “a larger and more important parish than his own.”

Nevertheless, burdened as she was with work and cares, no one can picture Mrs. Wesley as creeping with stooping shoulders through life, a weary, heavy-laden woman.

All her work was done with a hearty cheerfulness. And at fifty years of age she said, in a letter to the Archbishop of York, tried as she had been with poverty, that she believed it was easier to be content without riches than with them.

There was indeed a secret fountain which kept her inmost heart fresh. Every morning and every evening she spent an hour alone with God. That morning hour of prayer made the day's yoke easy

and its burden light ; that evening hour kept her heart and conscience at rest.

Prayer was indeed her constant daily strength and her refuge in the direst emergencies. Once, when their house was found to be on fire, and the mother, having thrice tried to escape, had been driven back by the flames, a fourth time she lifted up her heart in fervent prayer to God, and had strength given her to "wade through" the fire, as she said. Her son John, then a child of six years old, was the last saved ; he was taken out of the nursery window by men raised one on the shoulders of another. When all the children were gathered round the parents, the father said, "Come, neighbours, let us kneel down and give thanks to God. He has given me all my eight children : I am rich enough."

After that Mrs. Wesley gave especial care and attention to this boy John, believing he had been saved for great purposes. And John Wesley did indeed, by his unwearying labours of fifty years, succeed in turning countless numbers of men and women from sin and vice to holiness and to God.

At one time, during an absence of her husband's, there being no service in the church, and no one who could read really well in the parish, Mrs. Wesley used to gather the people in her large kitchen and read them a sermon, and pray and converse with them in a simple, solemn way. Two hundred were sometimes assembled in this way, listening with reverent attention. An unfavourable report of this

meeting was, however, sent to her husband, and he wrote to her complaining of it. She replied that, although she was a woman, she was mistress of a large household, that none of the parishioners could read a sermon well enough to edify the rest, that she felt responsible for helping them as much as she could whilst he was absent, and she was but preparing hearers for his church. But if he continued to disapprove, she simply requested, "Do not *advise*, but *command* me to desist." Her husband's *command* was God's authority for her, and in all things not contrary to her conscience she unhesitatingly submitted. His *advice* was human advice, and she could not alter her convictions at his will or her own.

The daughters of the house grew up wise, quick-witted, firm in conviction, and gentle in spirit. The sons, though not agreeing in opinion, grew up loving and honouring each other, denying themselves to help each other and their parents, and all revering their mother and seeking her approval as their sanction and reward, to the last day of her life.

When her sons grew up, and went to the universities and became men of learning and influence, they still loved to seek her counsel about the books they read, especially religious books, and in their difficulties of thinking or of practical living

And she, on her part, had wisdom and courage, and largeness of mind and heart, to trust them to work out their own convictions, always ready to aid them with suggestions, but never fretting them by

narrow rules from her own experience which might not suit them ; and yet faithfully telling them when she thought them wrong, and dear to them in her rebukes as in her sympathy.

Once, when John consulted her as to scruples suggested by a religious man as to the " lawfulness of mirth," she wrote :

" Would you judge of the lawfulness or unlawfulness of pleasure, take this rule : whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, or takes off the relish of spiritual things ; in short, whatever increases the strength and authority of your body over your mind, that thing is sin to you, however innocent it may be in itself."

She had her home in her latter years with her son John. One Sunday morning in August he found her, he wrote, on the borders of eternity, but she had no doubt nor fear ; ready, as soon as God should call, to depart and be with Christ.

She was in her seventy-eighth year. About three o'clock in the afternoon of the Friday following, her son John went to her bedside and found her change was near. He sat down on the bedside.

She was in her last conflict, unable to speak, but quite sensible. Her look was calm and serene, and her eyes fixed upwards, while they commended her soul to God. And then gently, without any struggle or sign or groan, her soul was set at liberty.

Her children stood around her bed and fulfilled her last request, uttered a little before she had lost her speech. "Children," she had said, "as soon as I am released, sing a psalm of praise to God."

Almost an innumerable company of people gathered around her grave, when, a few days afterwards, her son John committed her body to the earth. He preached to them of the great white Throne of Judgment before which all shall stand.

Often and often he had preached to tens of thousands listening with awed silence, or with tears of repentance and joy; but he writes of that funeral gathering: "It was one of the most solemn assemblies I ever saw, or expect to see this side of eternity."

CATHERINE TAIT,

WIFE OF THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

I WOULD bring before you one more portrait of a Christian mother who has but just passed from among us, whose beneficent matronly presence many among us have felt, Catherine Tait, wife of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

I bring her before you because, devoted wife and mother as she was, from the extent of her life-long charities, and the world-wide hospitality which her position required of her, her life forms a natural link between the women we have been speaking of, whose world was the home, and the immortal company we are to look on next, whose passion of pity made their home the world, and all the needy and suffering children of men their family.

And also it is good for us to think of her, because we have been allowed to see the divine hidden spring by which her life of constant beneficence was fed.

Early in her girlhood, in the midst of a bright and pleasant home, where she was dearly loved, Catherine Spooner's heart was penetrated with the love of Christ, and she longed to devote herself entirely to the service of others for His sake, either

by teaching poor children, or by making known the Christian faith to the ignorant.

An early friend remembers that in the flush of her bright girlhood, when every innocent delight was poured into her cup, she once told her how she had heard in her inmost heart, amidst all these joys and pleasures, a hidden voice saying—

“Make for the higher.”

This aspiration and consecration of her life was never lowered. But in the providence of God it shone forth on the world through the home of which her presence was the sunshine. *“Make for the higher”* was at once the hallowing and the sweetening of the lower things for her.

Early she became the wife of the head-master of Rugby, one of our great public schools for boys of the higher classes.

Seventy boys lived in her husband's house, and hundreds were educated in the great school, and lived near. And, young as she was when she married, her motherly kindness was felt throughout the house and the school.

When any of the boys were ill, she interested herself in them, and saw that they were cared for as in their own homes. If any of them lost any near and dear kindred, he would feel at once that he was not lonely among strangers. Mrs. Tait's heart and her husband's were touched for them.

She used to keep the complicated school accounts with perfect clearness and accuracy. She shared in her husband's preparations for his historical lectures.

The poor came to her house and were wisely succoured. They loved and respected her much, and she established a school for their children, in which she taught every day. At the same time the home was a centre for a large circle of friends and relations, and the blessed training-place for her own little children. The routine of the day at Rugby may give a clear idea of what the life of such an Englishwoman can be.

Soon after seven o'clock she left her room. Then at eight o'clock she went out through the town to the parish church which she loved, and joined in the public prayers and praises there.

After some quiet time again by herself in her own room, she came down to family prayers. Full of interest in all that was going on, she shared with friends who might be staying in the house in the news of the morning; but by a quarter past ten at latest she had gone to her work of ordering the large household.

On certain marked days she received at home the poor people who wished to speak with her, and noted all their wants. If there was time she would join in reading aloud with friends who might be staying with her, or would take lessons in foreign languages.

No time was lost, and therefore she had always time to spare.

On half-holidays she was always with her husband, riding with him along the green country lanes and over the meadows.

She was the chosen companion of her husband's thoughts, as well as the rest of his heart. They both delighted in natural beauty. Her mind was stored with the Sacred Scriptures, and with passages from our great poets, which would flow forth in their walks together among the hills, in the holidays.

Any spare half-hour of her busy day she liked to spend in reading.

In the evenings she would have the little boys to tea, making them feel at home by the light of her pleasant face and her kindly welcome.

The elder boys would often join the family circle at dinner and in the evenings, and she would talk freely with them on any subject of interest.

The poor in the town knew and loved and respected her. She established a school for their children, in which she taught herself nearly every day.

From the great school of Rugby her husband was removed to the Deanery of Carlisle, to be at the head of one of our grand old cathedrals.

And so the first stage of her life of blessing passed by, and she entered on the second.

At the Deanery the well-spring of Christian life within made a fresh fountain of beneficence of what has been apt among us sometimes to be rather a still pool of repose.

In Carlisle she gathered the poor of the large city to the ancient Deanery which was her home, taught in their schools, and spent hours in the

workhouse, where the very poorest and most forsaken are sheltered.

Here her domestic life ever deepened in joy and blessing. Seven children grew around them in this home at Carlisle, and she was the joyous centre of all the family joy.

Her husband writes of her :

“ It was one of her chief characteristics to find enjoyment in any duty she had to perform. There was in her no trace of the fine lady who thinks her husband’s common work a thing in which she need not take much interest. Her heart was in all we had to do together, and in all my separate work. While she found time for her own labours among the poor, and her own reading, her deepest interests were ever mine.

“ It was the same at Carlisle, in London, and at Lambeth. The Chapter of the cathedral at Carlisle would have been very dull indeed, had it not been for her readiness to make the members of the Chapter welcome at the Deanery. When we first went to London, she went to every opening of a church, and as often as possible to confirmations. She tried ever to be with me when I was called to preach.

“ The routine of such duties, and the parochial gatherings which generally accompanied their discharge, were sources of real enjoyment to her; she loved to make the acquaintance of the clergy, and to take an interest in the separate work of each. So at Lambeth (the archiepiscopal palace),

the gatherings of bishops, with all that was going on in their several dioceses, the meetings of Convocation, for all the members of which she threw open our house, these things gave her the truest pleasure. Yet she fully enjoyed extraneous pleasures also. I never knew any one who felt more happy at a well-arranged London dinner-party, when sitting next some Cabinet Minister, or man of letters, or bishop, or bright young lawyer, or clergyman interested in the work of his profession. Our periodical visits to Windsor (the Queen's palace) in later days were thoroughly enjoyed by her; and she seemed always ready for a simple, happy holiday, when the pressure of business and the necessary claims of society allowed her leisure."

God gave her wonderfully good health, and she had a natural joyousness and buoyancy of spirit, which in her girlhood often made her laugh to herself for happiness.

And yet, through this life of activity and prosperity and social intercourse, deep in her heart rose a spring of deep communion with God, fed through the public services of the Church, by private prayer, and by the living, intelligent, continual study of the Holy Scriptures.

And so, when again and again, as it happened to her in the wonderful education of God, this life of activity was suddenly overspread by the shadow of dangerous illness in those she loved, or rent asunder by a chasm of death, she was ready; and, rooted in the love of God, through all the tempest

of sorrow stood as unselfish and strong to sustain others through the storm, as she was bright to gladden them in the calm.

The first shadow that fell on that happy married life was the sudden and dangerous illness of her husband at Rugby. The young wife kept constant watch beside his sick-bed. All through the worst days she was ready to pray with him, and to repeat helpful texts and hymns. And when he began to recover, though with health much shattered for life, she was ever ready to cheer and sustain him. She said to him afterwards that her heart had been stayed on the divine words, “Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.”

The second sorrow came on the full bright home at Carlisle, wave after wave, all but overwhelming and sweeping the whole beautiful, ordered, living, happy home-world away.

A lovely picture has been left us in her own words of the perfect family at Carlisle, whilst their number was still unbroken:—

“Each morning Crauford” (her only boy) “and Chatty used first to come to me, learn their verse of a hymn and a psalm, and then say their prayers. Frances used then to come to say her little verse and her sweet prayer; then with a merry bound she would kiss her mother and run off to breakfast, for which she was always in a hurry.

She was the most artless, innocent babe. She never lived, sweet lamb, to understand what sin is. Washed in her Saviour's blood, called by His name, signed with His sign, she, my pretty, merry prattler, soon after left us for His presence.

“At that time Chatty was learning the morning hymn in which this verse occurs—

‘Saviour, to Thy cottage home
Once the daylight used to come.’

Each time when she came to that verse, she would stop, and with her dear finger point to a picture of our Saviour's childhood, and say, ‘That is the cottage home, mamma.’

“Often they used to read a short portion of the Bible, and I said a short prayer with them, and they went to their breakfast.

“We had family prayers about nine, and papa used to question them on what he had read, to which they used to reply very nicely. The three eldest then went to the schoolroom for an hour.

“Chatty, Frances, and Susan used to be our sweet and merry companions at breakfast. When they became, as they often did, too noisy, clinging Chatty would beg to stay, ever longing to be near her mother; and boisterous little Frances would ask for her bit of bread and honey, and be off to fill the nursery with her merry laugh and play. Susan, my loving baby, used always to stay till the church bell began. On Wednesdays, Fridays, and saints' days, also on every birthday, any that liked used to accompany us to the cathedral. I

always found two, more frequently four, ready when I came down. On other days they used to play in the garden and abbey grounds, and what a merry party always came to claim a kiss when we came out of church ! After church was my busy time, and I could not stay much with them then, as I had either home business to do, or school, infirmary, workhouse, or poor to attend to.

“ We had days and times for each, and these sweet girls used to think how they would love to help when they grew older ; in many ways they did help me already.

“ Saturday was their own day. I used to spend from half-past eleven or twelve in the schoolroom, hear all the lessons of the week, question closely on the history, which I had to read on purpose (it was wonderful how much they knew), look over all exercises, copies, etc., and hear the music learned in the week. Great was the delight those Saturdays gave them, and who can tell the joy to their mother ?

“ Sundays were days of great happiness with them. They would often, before we were up, come in, the five together, with their bright, happy Sunday look, take their place beside us, and chant with clear voice, ‘ This is the day the Lord hath made,’ then say all together a Sunday hymn—

‘ Put the spade and wheel away,
Do no weary work to-day,’ etc.

After their prayers I would explain the Gospel and Epistle for the day to the eldest.

“At family prayer we sang a hymn.

“When we went to breakfast, Catty and May, in turns, would conduct a Sunday-school of all the rest. They used to arrange it in beautiful order. In summer, when warm enough, in the garden, or, when this could not be, up the little steps leading to their father’s dressing-room ; and we from our room would hear their sweet voices sing hymn after hymn, and chant psalms. When I had time, I heard them say the Catechism.

“In the afternoon, after church, the little ones saw Sunday pictures ; then we read some book—the ‘Pilgrim’s Progress,’ last summer. We sat outside the Deanery door to read it, and people who came to walk there used to look with pleasure at that happy company. I can see little Chatty’s look of delight as she ran for the big book and found the place.

“After dinner was their time with their father ; each one in turn would climb on his knee and say the hymn and psalm they had learned for Sunday.

“On ordinary days they were in the schoolroom in the morning ; their quiet industry and regular progress we never shall forget. Their delight was to prepare their lessons in the afternoon in their father’s study. They would lie down on the floor, without disturbing him, and dearly did he love the little hum, which, like a sweet song, soothed him in his own work.”

They used to read pleasant books in the morning with their mother, the little girls sewing while the

reading went on. They used to make clothes for the poor and the blind, and to stuff pillow-cases for the sick, or dress dolls to give as presents to the younger ones.

So, from day to day, the mother, as one said who knew her well, *lived the Christian life with her children*; not so much *sending* them on, or even going before them and *calling* them on, but *going with them* every step of the way, in prayers and thanksgivings and little loving services to all around.

It was a bit of paradise on earth; indeed more, in some ways, than the first, a foretaste and type of the Paradise in the Holy City, for it was a training-place for the inconceivable blessedness of the glorious services there.

But the way from the foretaste here to the reality on high is dark, and already the shadow of the enemy who opens that way was at the door; a conquered enemy, however, who acts now as a porter to the heavenly fold. Yet still terrible to those he leaves behind, in the shadow of death.

Another babe was born into that happy home, and before the little one they all welcomed as their pet and darling was a month old, one after another of that bright little band began to fail with mortal sickness.

On their last Sunday of unbroken health little Frances came to her mother's bedside to look at the pictures, and would not leave her till she found one of the Good Shepherd carrying and leading the

lambs, when she was quite content to go off to bed.

When the elder ones came the mother showed them Sunday pictures, and they sang the hymn, "Behold, a Stranger at the door." She took up a picture of St. Stephen, who was, she told them, a "martyr."

"What is a martyr?" said Chatty.

The mother said—

"One who is called to die for Jesus Christ."

The little son said that "even little children had been martyrs."

The mother put her arms round Chatty and said—

"Yes, even such little ones as Chatty died gladly that they might go to be with Jesus."

Her mother could never forget the sweetness of the look with which the little one looked up in reply.

It was the last of those sweet Sunday lessons.

Within five weeks the five lovely little sisters had all sickened of scarlet fever and died.

And to the bereaved parents none were left but the only son and the baby of a few weeks old.

I cannot give you the whole touching story here. Through all their anguish of sorrow, the mother and father never failed to sustain their beloved little ones with prayer and tender watching, and holy words of God, to the very last.

Through all their pain and restlessness of fever, the little ones seemed never to lose their gentle

sweetness, their love for their parents and each other, their grateful sense of every little kindness done them, their faith in the Saviour who loves the children, their love to God.

“Oh, I am so tired, so tired!” was the moan of little Frances; and then she murmured, “Our Father, which art in heaven,” and fell off to sleep.

As Catty, one of the elder ones, was dying, her mother prayed once more the old familiar prayers with her. “She followed every word,” her mother wrote, “with her sweet lips, with hands meekly folded. After the prayers I said a hymn she loved:

‘Jesus, Saviour, Son of God,
Who for us earth’s pathway trod,
Who for us became a child,
Make me humble, meek, and mild.
I Thy lamb would ever be;
Jesus, I would follow Thee;
Let me love what Thou dost love,
Let me live with Thee above.’

“She followed every word of it; then she turned round and looked at her parents with eyes full of love. Her father said, ‘Oh, my Catty, we do so love you; you have been such a treasure to us. Everybody loves you, my child.’ A look and sense of love more than we or any earthly love could give burst on her dear soul, now nearly ripe for heaven; she turned and looked with a look we can never forget at us, and then upwards towards heaven, and pointed there distinctly with her finger. While looking she seemed to see it open before her, and its light rested upon her enough for even our dull senses to perceive in part. While pointing up-

ward I said, 'She sees in heaven her Chatty, her Susan, and her Frances'" (the children who had just died). "When I mentioned the name of Frances, of whom before we had not spoken to her as taken from us, a brighter light came upon her, and again she pointed clearly and distinctly, and then, with an earnestness no words can convey, stretched forth her hands to be taken also, as if she saw, as surely she did see, the angels waiting."

She lingered long. They could not give up hope for this most precious one, their eldest born. Grief would have its way, in uncontrollable agonies of tears.

But at length her father was able to kneel by her bedside, in the presence of his household, all weeping and sobbing around for the loss of that precious life, and to say, "Thy will be done," and the Commendatory Prayer of our Church, commanding her departing soul to God.

Still the beloved child lingered. The mother was so exhausted that she had to go and lie down on her own bed; but at four in the morning she awoke, and though still unable to rise, in an agony of prayer she seemed to follow the soul of her dying child through the last conflict. After that the mother became unconscious till her husband came in to tell her all was over.

And then she only said, "She went at four."

One only of the little band of sisters remained—May, the second; but she also was stricken.

The father and mother recovered strength to be with their darling and sustain her to the last, say-

ing her favourite hymns, reading the Bible, and praying with her.

At half-past five on the last morning of her life below, her mother writes: "May said, 'I am going to say my prayers ;' and closing her eyes, she continued praying for some minutes, and then, in a whisper we could plainly hear, she repeated the Creed, 'I believe in God the Father—and in Jesus Christ.' She then called her father and said, 'I have said my prayers and am going to sleep; will you say a little prayer with me ?'

"And then she murmured, 'May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all.'

"These were her last words.

"She was going home. She was not to be separated from her beloved sisters. Her father and I knelt hand in hand beside the bed. I said to her the hymn she had chosen when her sister died—

'Away, thou dying saint, away :
Flee to the mansions of the blest.'

I did not shrink now from saying it to her, as I had when she first asked for it. I knew it was well. I turned my anguish into prayer; prayer that God would comfort us in our extreme desolation, and strengthen us to bear all His will; prayer for my son, that God would make up to him for the loss of all those sweet sisters who seemed so gently leading him; and Himself quiet him, comfort him, keep him from all evil influence.

"Until eight o'clock we continued thus beside her,

saying texts and verses that she loved, and which she seemed to follow ; and then her summons came, and the brightness of those beautiful eyes closed for ever on this world of sin and sorrow, and opened in heaven.

“ Thus were we called to part with these five most blessed little daughters, each of whom had been received in prayer, borne in prayer, educated with prayer, and now given up, though with bitter anguish, yet with prayer and thanksgiving.

“ Now daily we say for them this thanksgiving and commemoration—

“ ‘ Lord, Thou hast let Thy little ones depart in peace.

“ ‘ Into Thy hands, O God, we have commended their spirits ; for Thou hast redeemed them, O Lord God of truth.

“ ‘ Thou hast brought their souls out of prison, and now they praise Thee. Thou hast delivered them from the body of this death.

“ ‘ Thou hast said unto them, To-day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.

“ ‘ Now they feel the salvation of the Saviour ; now they feel the anointing of Christ, even the oil of gladness with which Thou art anointed.

“ ‘ Thou hast guided them through the valley of death.

“ ‘ Thy loving Spirit leads them forth into the land of righteousness, into Thy holy hill, into Thy heavenly kingdom.

“ ‘ Thou hast received them into the arms of Thy

mercy, and given them an inheritance with Thy saints in light.

“‘ There they reign with Thy elect angels, Thy blessed saints departed, Thy holy prophets and apostles, in all joy, glory, felicity, and blessedness, for ever and ever. Amen.’”

Soon after this desolation of their home, they were removed to what was the third and last stage of her earthly life, her husband being called successively to the Bishopric of London and the Archbishopric of Canterbury.

In a letter written immediately after this change she writes : “ Think of them (the children) as their father thinks of them, as a bright chain to draw our spirits up to heaven. . . . By this agony God has no doubt been making ready His servant to do much work for Him on earth.”

The terrible devastating storm had not made life empty to her, because she was still in one kingdom and service with her beloved ; and the work she loved best was the work of serving and succouring which is the life of heaven.

After this followed twenty years of ceaseless, fruitful labours in the bright, Christian home, again filled with four children, “ which, in its simple and natural piety,” it is said, “ was like a country parsonage, and in its large hospitality a archbishop’s palace ; ” that home which was a welcoming place for the whole English Church, and more, and which helped to diffuse through the charities of the largest city in the world the natural

and personal kindness of home. She never lost her personal sympathy with individual sufferers in the extent of the institutions she founded, and ordered so wisely.

All her good works seem to have grown naturally out of present needs. Her Orphan Home arose from a day's visit to the East of London, where numbers of little children had been left orphans at the time by a terrible outbreak of cholera. She established it at first close to the bishop's palace at Fulham, providing and collecting the funds and arranging all the details with wonderful skill; visiting it constantly, and giving counsel to those who managed it for her. When she used to come among the little ones, it was with all her heart, as if she had only sympathy to give them. "She was ever patient, ever pitying," one said who knew her there, "and the tears would come to her motherly eyes at the sight of the little helpless creatures who crowded round her at her visits to the Home."

Her cherished plan for carrying on this orphanage was to find one young girl among the rich who would provide for one of these poor little bereaved children, pray for her, and watch over her with sisterly care.

She also founded a Ladies' Diocesan Society, which gathered together the women of rank and wealth who only live in London during the session of Parliament and the Court season, to unite in giving a regular portion of their time to assist the poor of the metropolis, assigning to each lady some

workhouse, or hospital, or refuge, or orphanage, or some poor families to attend to.

And yet, with all the strain of this large organization, she could always find time to enter heart and soul into the individual troubles of one and another of the ladies themselves who came to her, lifting up her heart in intercessory prayer, the fervency and fitness of which years could not efface from the memory of the one so succoured.

And in the park and gardens of the archbishop's country palace she arranged with the gardeners the distribution of hampers of vegetables for the sick and poor, apportioning the large hampers to the large families, and always remembering to add sweet flowers to the useful vegetables. Her wise authority was felt throughout every corner of the household.

"Nothing could be more characteristic of her," a friend writes, "than her way of spending Sunday. When you met her in the early morning her very face seemed to tell you it was her day of days, the under-current of her daily life welling to a higher level, and allowed freer course by hindrances being put aside for a time. She honestly tried to give the day, whole and entire, to God and His special service, or to the service of His poor and suffering creatures, in some form or other; yet never judging others."

And an aged American bishop who visited them wrote of their every-day life:

"I delight to stay with these people. From

early service in the morning to the late prayers at night life seems always in God's presence."

And so the beautiful, fervent, ordered life went on, nourished by the old familiar springs ; by the presence of our Lord in the Sacrament, by His presence in His suffering ones whom she succoured, by the Holy Scriptures, and by prayer.

Until at last the last sorrow came, and sent her home.

The one son spared from the desolation of the home at Carlisle, the only son, grew up to twenty-nine. The love between the mother and this only son was most devoted. His early, never-forgotten lessons in the Bible were mostly from her. She entered into his historical reading whilst at the University. He consulted her in every difficulty and trouble, and was the hope and joy of the home.

And at nine and twenty, when life was opening in widest usefulness and hope before him, after months of lingering illness, he died.

The bereaved mother stood for one moment alone at his grave, when the burial was over, and said in a low but intensely earnest and thrilling voice, heard only, it is believed, by one young relative, "I believe in the Resurrection of the dead."

Six months longer she lived.

"None but my God and I know what I have suffered," she said softly to a trusted friend.

She by no means shut herself up with her grief.

She went about doing her daily work as courageously as ever.

But the change which sorrow wrought upon her countenance, her furrowed cheeks and rapidly whitening hair, told what had else been almost untold.

A multitude of guests, bishops of the Anglican Church from all parts of the world, American, European, African, Indian, were gathered at the time in England, and numbers of these were welcomed at the archbishop's palace.

One of these, an American, as he watched her unflagging courtesy as she ministered, pale and sorrow-stricken, to the multitude of guests, said that he could scarcely believe such fortitude and self-constraint were possible. They were only possible by an effort too great for heart and brain.

Six months after her son's death the unfailing, vigorous health gave way, and she died.

She was perfectly calm and collected in her last moments. She spoke of her five and thirty years of wedded love. She said she wished to live a little while, for Christmas would be sad without the mother. Her husband administered the Holy Communion to her, to the daughters, and the physician. Together they said the *Nunc Dimittis*, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace." When his voice faltered in the hymn, "Jesus, Lover of my soul," her voice supplied the missing words.

Once more he offered beside her the beautiful

Commendatory Prayer they had said together beside their five children. And soon afterwards her breathing ceased, with a gentle sigh.

She had gone home to the Father's house, of which her own earthly home had been such a lovely type; the Father's house, which is the centre of love and succour to the whole world.

PART VIII.

THE WOMEN OF THE ARMY OF SUCCOUR.

WE have been looking together at one and another of a blessed company, each apart, living and loving and rendering their services of love in their own little world of home, unconscious of any human eyes being on them but those of their beloved; the ordinary services and sacrifices of all holy loving women, the mother, the daughter, the wife, the sister—flashed into publicity by the fires of exceptional sorrow, or lifted into prominence by the exceptional celebrity of those belonging to them.

We pass on now to another company, in whom the devotion and pity of the woman, mother, wife, or child is poured forth on a larger world, of the orphans, the sick, the suffering, and the oppressed. We come to the great organization of charity, the Christian Church, to that great army of succour which has never ceased, since the days when Mary broke the alabaster box on the feet of Christ, and Dorcas made her coats and garments for the poor in Syrian Lydda, and Lydia, the first European Christian, opened her house to the persecuted

apostle, to shed the glow of motherly and sisterly lovingkindness through every age, and every part of Christendom, on battle-fields, in hospitals, in prisons, among the outcast, the helpless, the wronged, the sinful, and the lost.

For the whole Church is as a Bride, helpmeet of the mighty Healer and Saviour of the lost world.

The whole Church, in her ideal, is as the heavenly Mother, free and majestic and tender, to gather and succour and save. The whole Christian Church is this in the divine purpose, and has been this in scattered, imperfect human fulfilment through saintly men and women, from age to age, from land to land, never, in any one age or country in which she has existed, having failed to exhibit something of the divine likeness of love.

The women of this army of charity differ in their mode of working, in the objects of their succour, in individual character. But all have this one characteristic. They are stirred by a passion of pity for this suffering, sinful world, inspired by love to the Saviour of the world, sustained by continual communion with Him through prayer.

They are of all ages and of all social classes. Girls of sixteen, moved with this love to God and to His suffering creatures, give the strength and beauty of their youth to cheer the sick and aged. Aged women find the blessed work as heart-satisfying in age as in youth.

We have seen already the Princess Elizabeth of Hungary, during her happy married life, and after-

wards in her widowhood, devoting herself to the service of the sick and poor, lavishing her royal revenues to maintain orphanages and hospitals, and to feed the famine-stricken, and at the same time serving them personally by the sick-bed and in the poor cottage, as if she had nothing but the service of her hands to give.

We have seen the dyer's daughter, Catharine of Siena, stooping beneath the oil and bread she carried to the poor in her native city, and by her prayer and faith and her eloquence reconciling men and cities at enmity with each other, and patiently binding up the wounds of the leprous and the diseased.

Empresses, like Mary Feodorovna of Russia, are among this happy company; queens, like Elizabeth Christina of Prussia, and Marie Lezzinska of France, using their great revenues in trust as stewards for the needy, and selling their jewels, if necessary, to succour the sick and suffering.

Ladies of rank and wealth are among them, gathering the poor to their homes, like Madame de Miramion, Madame Quatremère, and Lady Elizabeth Hastings; or leaving their luxurious homes to go into the noisome dwellings of poverty and sin, and bring healing and light there; and often sacrificing all to live permanently among those they succoured, and make a home for the poor and sick and aged, who otherwise would have had none.

Yet, I believe we shall find the greatest succourers of the poor have been among the poor

themselves, because the sacrifice God delights in is the sacrifice of self; and the poor, giving freely their own selves and all they have, thus touch the hand of the Infinite Giver, and draw, not on their own failing stores, but on the infinite treasury of the Almighty God.

Two hundred years ago a holy man called Vincent de Paul devoted himself entirely to the service of the suffering and lost; and, himself poor, he opened the hearts and purses of thousands to works of charity, which continue to this day throughout Christendom.

It was much on his heart that the alms too often given from impulse, without steady determination to benefit the receiver, lavished for a time and then leaving the destitution as great as ever, should be systematically organized and distributed for the permanent good of the sufferers.

He saw that benevolently intentioned women were too apt to be content with an act of charity, instead of steadfastly aiming at the permanent benefit of the sufferers their charity relieved.

In this work he found the helper he needed in a widowed lady of some wealth, called Mademoiselle* Legras.

She was thirty-four years of age when she lost her husband. During her married life she had devoted much time to the sick and poor of her parish, visiting them in sickness, waiting on them,

* "Mademoiselle," not "Madame," according to the custom of those times, because Mademoiselle Legras was by marriage a bourgeoisie, and the title "Madame" was then only given to women of noble birth.

comforting the dying ; and now she desired to spend her whole life in aid of the suffering, abandoning the ordinary life altogether.

The wise Vincent de Paul would do nothing in haste, and he counselled her to wait four years, and put her purpose to the test, before she took any outward step.

Some years before he had established societies or sisterhoods of charitable ladies in various towns, who gave a portion of their time and substance to the service of the poor.

At first these had answered well, but with time zeal was apt to flag, and Vincent de Paul now sent out Mademoiselle Legras to rekindle the dying energies of the workers, and to bring more order into the work.

For this purpose she went over many dioceses.

On arriving in a village she collected the women who composed the charitable sisterhood, and gave them the instructions which they often required. She exhorted them to persevere in an office so holy in the sight of God, increased their numbers, taught them by her own example not to shrink from attending the sick in their most desperate diseases, and gave them money, linen, and medicines.

Her next care was to ascertain the state of education ; to collect young girls together and instruct them ; and if the village possessed no schoolmistress, to send for one, and form her to her task by daily examples and judicious precepts. All this she did, not as a task, but with zeal and fervour,

cheerfully submitting to every personal inconvenience, living poorly, and sleeping on the worst beds, because she could not bear to preach patience to the poor whilst herself surrounded by the luxuries of wealth. The good she thus accomplished was surprising. She was welcomed with joy, and when she left benedictions followed her.

Still, though the greatest ladies in the land often joined these associations, they were not steady enough in their working to be satisfactory. And at last, in the year 1633, Vincent de Paul found four girls of the class of domestic servants, poor and modest and zealous, whom Mademoiselle Legras took into her house to train. To these four others were gradually added. They were bound together by a vow taken afresh every year, for the year, to remain unmarried, to have no property of their own, and to be obedient to those over them, ready to do what they were commanded, and to go whithersoever they were sent. And so they went forth, nursing the sick, teaching poor children, caring for outcast babes; gathered in communities in the lowest parts of the great cities, scattered in twos and threes in the villages, fearlessly devoting themselves day and night in hospitals for the wounded in battle, or in infirmaries tainted with infectious disease; often dying, one after another, at their posts of mercy, and always unhesitatingly replaced by companions equally ready to succour and to die.

Their dress to this day is the quaint dress of a servant in the seventeenth century, which the first

four chosen by Vincent de Paul and trained by Mademoiselle Legras naturally wore.

No fasts, vigils, nor austerities of any kind are prescribed to them; only such hardships as come necessarily in their services of love.

They rise winter and summer at four, pray twice a day, live with the greatest frugality, drink wine only in illness, attend on the sick in their most disgusting and painful illnesses, watch the whole night long by the dying, think it nothing to be immured within the walls of an hospital breathing air tinted by disease. In the words of Vincent de Paul, "Their convents are the homes of the sick; their cell is a hired room; their cloister the streets of the city or the wards of the hospitals; obedience is their solitude, the fear of God their grating, strict and holy modesty their only veil."

"Servants of the Poor;" "Sisters of Charity." They began in 1633 with these four poor servant-girls, and now they count among them ladies of rank and wealth, and go forth by thousands to their work of self-sacrificing service in all lands and climes.

Such sisterhoods of mercy are now common in all Christian countries, varying in name and in rules, in all that can be termed the clothing of the life, but all, as far as they are what they profess to be, inspired by the same love to the redeeming, pitying Lord, and devoting to the needy and suffering, for His sake, not merely the overflowings of life and possessions, but the whole.

HANNAH MORE.

WITH the stories of three Englishwomen who in the quiet of their own homes led lives as inspired by pity as these, we will finish our glimpses of these succourers of many.

The first was called Hannah More. She was born more than a hundred years ago, in 1745, and died in 1833, at the advanced age of eighty-eight.

She was one of a family of five sisters, who never married, but lived together in tender affection and unbroken sympathy, helping each other in all good works, a natural sisterhood of mercy.

They were women of marked individuality of character, excellent sense, and true piety, and some of them of brilliant wit. But the crown and pride of the little family group was Hannah. Not a touch of envy marred their sisterly delight in her fame and successes.

She wrote books, in verse and prose, which were most widely admired in her day, translated into many languages, circulated by tens of thousands, and praised by the greatest critics of the time. Royal ladies, bishops, literary men, vied in the praises of her writings.

Her writings are not among the literature which lives. No one reads them now. There is not among them one heart-born hymn which lives in

the heart of the Church, or one real work of art which lives in the thoughts of men, such as have sprung from many a mind inferior to hers in power, and from many a heart certainly not deeper than hers in devotion.

But there is nothing in that thought that need perplex us, or that would sadden her.

The characteristic of her writings is strong, good sense pointedly expressed, keen and vivacious wit, earnest faith, and true philanthropy.

She understood the wants of her times and met them. Her literary work was coloured by the intellectual fashions of her times, and with its fashions has faded. But it is no small gift to have influenced for good thousands in her own day, and to live on among us, if not in her own words, yet, with a truer life, in the souls those words moved.

And the introduction of Hannah More leads me to say a few words to you about a mode of service which has been frequently assigned to women in the Christian Church, also essentially motherly and sisterly work, but in its nature hiding the speaker in the thing spoken, so that less than of any other can I give you sketches of those who have rendered it.

I mean the ministries of *teaching* and of *song*.

The records of this department of womanly service begin in the Acts of the Apostles with Lois and Eunice, the mother and grandmother who taught Timothy the Holy Scriptures from a child; with Priscilla, who with her husband Aquila

brought the fuller light to the great orator Apollos ; and so down through Monica, the mother of Augustine, to numbers working around us now. But Eunice's teaching lives in Timothy, and Priscilla's in the burning eloquence of Apollos, and Monica's in Augustine, and lost in that dearer light alone they shine. They are in the most absolute sense what all Christians are in reality, not lights, but light-bearers.

Ever since, such home-teaching has been flowing through the Church, and hallowing and sweetening the world.

And also, in a wider circle, one of the most continuous womanly works of charity has been instituting and instructing schools for infants and girls, and the education of all classes.

Countless numbers of the noblest lives in Europe and America have owed their first inspiration, and their steady decisive moulding, to the influence of such teachers, women whose names are little known to the world, but glow for ever, like a sacred fire, in the hearts they enkindled to high purpose.

And moreover, in a circle wider than this, through books, the same power of heart and brain which was in Lois and Priscilla has moved, comforted, and influenced, in all ages, the minds of children, women, and men, by the feminine faculty of presenting in the concrete, in stories and histories of life and character, and so touching the heart, truths and principles which men more naturally render in the abstract.

Passing from those who have been called thus to teach, to the records of women to whom has been given a part in the service of Song, we rise to sources still nearer the fountains of all our Christian inspiration.

The first song of the Christian Church was the *Magnificat*, which flowed from the lips of the Blessed Virgin of Nazareth.

The first singer of the Church was the Mother of our Lord. From the depths of that silent heart and devoted life springs one hymn, and only one, which lives for ever.

And ever since, in the great chorus of Christian song, which is the voice of Christian life rising as in sacred fire to God, just as the ministry of charity is the voice of Christian life flowing forth in living waters towards man, a few of the deepest and tenderest hymns have been sung by women, and of these usually not more than one or two by any one, and mostly by blessed hidden ones whose names are little known.

Between these two companies of womanly teachers and singers stands another company, blending with both, whom I know not what to call but the story-tellers, rich in a faculty commonly bestowed on women, whether from those nursery stories of early days which link the listening children to the past of their forefathers, to the parables, narratives, and dramatic stories which teach and brighten the world by living pictures of the battles and victories, the hopes and joys and sorrows, of our common life.

Hannah More might be claimed by more than one of these ministering companies of her times through her books, although her words have not lived beyond her own times except in the lives they influenced.

She was among the story-tellers and also among the singers, and usually she consecrated all these gifts, little or great, to the succour of the needy and ignorant, and so joined the ranks of the great Army of Charity.

Probably her wit and vivacity shone more in conversation than in her books. She was most popular in the society of London, her society sought and its charm recognized by men and women of the most varied gifts and position ; critics, bishops, literary men, statesmen, philanthropists, and women of rank and intellect. There must have been a natural sweetness in her which melted any enemy. There was also a divine faith in her which lifted her above these fascinations, indeed above the tribunals of time altogether.

In middle life, when her fame was at its fullest, she retired to a home which she built in the country, with her four beloved sisters. And there the five devoted themselves heart and soul, time and fortune, to helping the poor and ignorant in some very neglected and abandoned villages among the Mendip Hills, near their dwelling.

They ventured, at the peril of their lives, into villages so depraved and lawless, that they were told the police dared not enter there.

They established schools for the children, found teachers for the young men and women, reclaimed thieves, softened savages, despaired of none; until one by one the loving sisterhood died from this world, leaving Hannah More alone, yet not alone, resigned and cheerful, sustained to the end by the love of the Saviour she had served, and the glorious hope of the reunions in His presence.

Our next introduction is a contrast in many ways to Hannah More.

SARAH MARTIN.

Not long ago, in a lowly cottage, near one of our large coast towns, there lived, with her aged grandmother, a poor young dressmaker called Sarah Martin.

She was an orphan, and maintained herself by diligent labour from morning till night with her needle. On the Sunday, her only day of rest, she gladly devoted much of her time to teaching in one of the Sunday schools, in which poor children are gathered and taught freely, sometimes by their rich neighbours, and sometimes by working men and women, who find it blessed thus to sacrifice their rare hours of leisure to help those more ignorant than themselves.

Often, on her way to her work, or to the school, this young dressmaker happened to pass the gaol or common prison of the town. Her heart yearned with pity to the degraded criminals shut up in it. No effort had yet been made to reclaim them. No good men or women visited them. It was like a refuse-heap of humanity, avoided by all.

Some have thought that the words of our Lord in the parable quoted at the beginning of this book, "I was in prison, and ye visited Me," referred only or chiefly to His faithful, martyred disciples im-

prisoned for His sake. Sarah Martin felt a wider meaning in that "Me," and yearned to rekindle the dying embers of the divine fire in the hearts of these most forsaken and degraded of our Lord's redeemed creatures.

For years this compassionate yearning rose and grew in her heart, silently organizing itself into an imperishable purpose, strengthened by prayer to God, and never weakened by idle prattling about it to others.

And at last the opportunity to carry it out came, the divine opportunity of the most desperate extremity of need.

A wretched, cruel mother was thrown into this prison for beating her own child.

The unnatural cruelty which naturally repelled every one else, attracted this Christ-like heart towards the sinner with a divine longing to save.

She asked permission to go and see the poor, abandoned creature. It was refused. But if we have learned anything from these Christian stories, it is that hindrances are oftener than not (this world being a most real battle-field) the natural first steps of the best works; the fullest rivers of blessings beginning their course by breaking through the rocks.

Sarah Martin was humble enough to bear the humiliation of refusal, and she simply asked again.

This time the permission was granted. She made her first step into that closed den of misery and iniquity. She trusted in God and in the

redeemable germ of good in the fallen human heart which He had made. She spoke to the miserable, cruel woman of her own guilt, and of the infinite pity of God.

The poor creature, who thought that God and man were against her, as she had been against all that is most sacred to man and to God, burst into tears at these faithful words of loving rebuke, and listened, a broken-hearted penitent, as the sisterly lips repeated to her the words uttered so long ago as they were nailing the Holy Jesus on the cross—

“ Father, forgive them ; for they know not what they do.”

That was the first step in Sarah Martin’s five and twenty years of patient labour.

By degrees she was admitted regularly into the prison, and by degrees she devoted more and more of her time to the work of rescue, sacrificing two of her working days to the prisoners, and living contentedly on the diminished earnings of the rest.

She succeeded in touching the conscience and winning the trust of the most hardened men and women ; and, what is almost harder, she succeeded in inspiring the love of labour into the most lazy, conquering the helpless indolence which is the source of so much moral malaria and disease.

She made them delight to do what pleased her, so that they would not only learn the lessons in reading and writing and in the Holy Scriptures which she set them, but do more. And, what was more, she awakened many of them to see, through

her life and words, the Saviour Who was the source of the pity in her heart, Who would go with them into the world of temptation beyond the prison, whither she could not accompany them, and to seek to please Him in the harder tasks that would be set them there.

She induced them to have a religious service on Sundays among themselves, no clergyman having yet been sent among them. And then, finding that this would help them most, she herself undertook to read to them at these services the Holy Scriptures and the prayers of our Church, taught them to chant the psalms in the Liturgy, singing with them, and made a little sermon for them herself, until at last a clergyman was appointed to conduct the service.

She was most ingenious, in her poverty, in turning everything to good account for her prisoners; straw for them to plait hats with, bits of cloth for patch-work, bones to make knives and spoons, scraps of paper or pasteboard, leaves of worn-out, torn old books.

She had wonderful skill in discovering or waking up their especial tastes and faculties, sometimes, for instance, giving them good drawings to copy, and so opening a new world of interest to any who had artistic gifts. And when her labours became more known and recognized, and money was given her to spend for their benefit, she used it with the same wise skill, always making her gifts a stimulus to work, and never suffering them to become mere doles

to save the labour of others or her own. Often, after hard days of work at her dressmaking, she would stand till past midnight cutting out and arranging the various materials she bought, to the best advantage, to provide employment for her pupils. And when they left the prison she would follow them up, endeavouring to induce their former masters to try them again, guarding them from their former bad companions, strengthening their feeble infant purposes for good in every way she could.

She kept strict account of all the money given her, paid for all she bought at once, and never suffered bills to be run up.

She had no example nor teacher in these wise labours. And she could never explain to others the secret of her success, any more than a true poet or painter can explain to others the mode of his working or the secret of his success.

She was a woman gifted with much natural tact and good sense ; she pitied and loved these fallen, forsaken brothers and sisters, and her whole heart was set on saving them. Love quickened all her faculties, gave her eyes to see the weak and strong points of her pupils, gave her ingenuity to meet all their varying needs.

The dirt of the poor wretched creatures, with the loathsome diseases it brought, was an especial trial to her, cleanly and delicate as she was in her own habits ; but she allowed herself to shrink from nothing in their service, and gradually succeeded in bringing them into more wholesome ways.

At times, and in some instances, she encountered opposition, and in many suffered disappointment. Her own temper, as usual with people of keen sympathies, was naturally hasty. Her strong, reasonable will rose strongly against unreasonable resistance, which made her patience and long-suffering the more wonderful.

But her trust and love and patience in thus succouring fallen humanity were fed continually by the living and dying love of the Son of man, in Whom the broken ideal of humanity is perfected, and to Whose holy likeness these broken fragments of humanity were to be restored.

When first she suggested to the prisoners to learn portions of the Holy Scriptures, many proudly refused. They did not like to have to learn like children; and they said, "It is of no use." "It is of use to me," she gently answered, "and why should it not be to you? I have tried it, and you have not."

Again, later on in her work, one poor, ignorant man fiercely opposed her religious teaching, spoke bitterly of God and His Word and Providence, and drew some of the rest away with him.

"As for that," said he, when she spoke to him of God and Christ, and repentance, "I won't believe a word of it. It is all nonsense. Victuals is what we want."

She patiently and skilfully met the arguments with which they opposed her, and brought round the others who had been drawn away. But this

one original opponent remained sullen ; and she on her part found it hard to forgive him for poisoning the minds of the rest. So it went on, until at last one of the prisoners themselves told her he thought she was sometimes a little severe, and pleaded for the offender. At first it was hard for her, whose heart was one glow of pity for them all, to be told this. And yet, just severity against profanity and sin, which misleads others, may, indeed, too easily, in our impulsive hearts, become implacability with the sinner.

But Sarah Martin had the real and rare humility of a heart open before God. She accepted the rebuke from her own pupil, went and spoke kindly to the offender, and soon gave him the opportunity of a talk with herself alone ; when she said to him, "Do you love your wife ?" "Oh yes," he said ; "and my wife loves me." "And do you love your children ?" "Oh yes, I love my children." "And were I or any other," she continued, "to say, 'I hate your wife, I hate your children,' would you like it ?" "No, I should not." "And yet you spoke against my God ; and of this lovely Book, the Bible, you said it is a pack of nonsense."

The man's heart was touched, and with much feeling he acknowledged that she was right, and said when he left the prison he would attend the public worship of God as his good wife had often advised him. Good had once more overcome evil ; love had overcome aversion once more, in her

own heart, and so in the heart to which she appealed.

She did not forsake her poor pupils when they left the prison for the world their previous sins had made it so hard for them to live well in. She did everything she possibly could to set them going again in the right way, ingeniously varying her methods according to their needs and characters, as a wise mother would for her own children.

For one she bought a donkey, to carry loads of fish from the fishermen on the coast to the inland villages ; for another, scales, and a little store of fish to sell ; for another she would intercede with a former master.

In all, she tried to awaken again the life of home affections and duties ; for all she laboured, to guard them against their former evil companions ; for the poor girls she established an evening school to keep them from temptation. And we must not forget that these labours of love were carried on by one herself poor, and by no means above the danger of want.

She had already given one day a week besides Sunday to her prison work ; now a kind lady came forward and paid for the work of another day in each week, so as to set her free. And in another way, very trying to faith, she was set free for the rest of the week by her own dressmaking work failing.

In a little book which she wrote, she tells us her secret : " My mind, in the contemplation of such

trials, seemed exalted by more than human energy; *for I had counted the cost, and my mind was made up.* If, whilst imparting truth to others, I became exposed to temporal want, this privation, so momentary to an individual, would not admit of a comparison with following the Lord, and thus administering to others."

She had learned quite literally to love others as herself; she had learned more, even the new commandment, to love others as our Lord has loved us; that is, even to the sacrifice of self, the one unfailing secret of fruitful life.

And so dying to self, the spring of heavenly life sprang up within her.

"The sower is rewarded," she wrote, "when, by a power not his own, the grain arises, and is still nourished by the sun and the rain from heaven. What is that to the delight I have known, when in my happy course I could stand still and see the salvation of God ? "

It was the old glorious story. Her harvest was, and could be, only the harvest of love, which is, *good to the beloved*; she sowed services, she reaped in the blessing on those she served.

She sowed with the divine uncarefulness of the children who know that the seed is the Father's, and His the harvest, and His the sun and the rain. She sowed *herself*, her own inmost being; and she reaped in the salvation of the inmost being of those for whom she sacrificed.

And so the beautiful life went on to the end.

She was not suffered to want; though the provision came to her as to the birds of heaven, in daily handfuls, and not in overflowing barns.

She was not, indeed, exempted from suffering, in her last illness. To the last, like so many of the beloved disciples, the footsteps of the Master's were hers.

And like Him, and in Him, she overcame.

When the lulling vinegar was offered Him to still the anguish of the cross, when He had tasted thereof, He would not drink.

About twenty minutes before her death, this lowly and faithful disciple, in her great anguish, asked for an anodyne to still the pain.

Instead of giving it her, and so dulling her last conscious moments here, the nurse told her her hour was come.

“Thank God! Thank God!” she said, and pressed and clapped her feeble hands together in token of victory.

And so she died, and went among the blessed and great multitude of those who have overcome.

MRS. FRY.

OUR next portrait is of a woman in very different circumstances from Sarah Martin, but moved by the same life-long passion of pity and unconquerable patience of hope to spend herself in saving and succouring the most lost and degraded.

The childhood of Elizabeth Fry, born Elizabeth Gurney, was mostly spent in one of our happy English country homes.

She was one of a family of four brothers and seven sisters, early left motherless, when the eldest was only seventeen, and the youngest not two years old.

She writes of the delight she had, as a little child, in the beauty of the country, the trees, the flowers, the little brooks, the old-fashioned garden where her mother used to walk with her, which she used to think was like the paradise Adam and Eve lived in ; her mother's beds of favourite flowers, and her collection of shells ; the poor people in the village whom she early learned to care for.

She was naturally very timid, afraid of her father's gun, afraid of the dark, afraid of the great sea, so that she used to cry at the first sight of it, when the family went for health to the seaside. She had delicate health, and could not learn much

from books, and thought herself very inferior to her sisters. Yet she had a quick and penetrating mind, and real originality of thought. Her affections were very strong ; she loved her mother intensely, and used often to weep after she went to bed at the thought that her mother might die, and to wish that, when the family had to die, two large walls might press towards each other and crush them all, that they might die all together, and be spared the misery of parting. She seldom left her mother's side if she could help it, and would watch her when asleep with "exquisite anxiety," and gently creep to her bedside to listen, from the awful fear that she might not be breathing.

Her mother also loved her very dearly, and used to call her "my dovelike Betsy ;" although, beneath all her gentleness of look and voice and manner, she had a very strong will.

Her reverence, also, for both her father and mother was very deep. She remembered all her life how solemn she used to feel, as she sat in silence beside her mother after reading the Holy Scriptures, before they went to bed. And she never lost the sadness in her heart whenever she recalled the great sorrow of that beloved mother's early death.

The country house, Earlham, in Norfolk, in which her youth was spent, is large and old. It stands in a well-wooded park, with a clear river winding in front of it, through broad green lawns. Tall old trees bend over the river, and beyond the

smooth lawns rise extensive woods, carpeted with wild flowers, long grass, and mosses, with pleasant green grassy paths, where the children used to wander, gather wild flowers, and play together.

It was a fair band of seven sisters.

Elizabeth, as a young girl, was tall and slight, and moved and danced gracefully. She had a profusion of soft flaxen hair, and a sweet and pleasant countenance. Her voice was always remarkably sweet, and as a girl her singing was like the warbling of a bird.

She rode fearlessly and well, and liked to dress in bright colours. The home was very pleasant and gay, with all those bright young people in it; and all kinds of interesting people liked to come and visit them.

At seventeen Elizabeth began to write in a little private book some of her thoughts and feelings.

The loss of the wise mother to guide the little flock is felt throughout those early pages.

“I am like a ship put out to sea without a pilot,” she writes; “heart and mind overloaded. I want some one to lean on.”

As yet she had not learnt to listen to the Good Shepherd of all, and to follow Him.

She felt so much society as they had a temptation to her.

“I feel by experience,” she says, “how much entering into the world hurts me; it leads me to the love of pomp and vanity, to jealousy and ambition.”

There are expressions of rapturous delight in nature, and also of deep disgust with her own faults.

Yet even here the true key-note of her life begins to sound.

"I love to feel for the sorrows of others," the young, brilliant, happy girl writes; "I love to pour wine and oil into the wounds of the afflicted."

And again :

"Seeing my father low this evening, I have done all I could to make him comfortable."

And then again :

"Most likely, a hundred years from this time neither one person nor anything that now has life will be alive. What is still more wonderful is that all should be so continually changing, almost without our observation."

The spirit which she felt reproachfully to be "so fly-away and worldly" was already beginning to soar into its true, eternal element.

Again :

"My mind is in a state of fermentation. I believe I am going to be religious, or some such thing."

"I am a bubble. I daily fall lower in my own estimation."

"I am now seventeen, and if some great circumstance does not happen to me, I shall have my talents devoured by moth and rust. They will one day lose their brightness, their virtue, and one day will prove a curse instead of a blessing. Dreaded day!"

“I must use extreme exertion to act really right, to avoid idleness and dissipation.”

The “great circumstance,” as usual, came in an ordinary, lowly shape.

She was deeply moved by a sermon which she heard from a stranger in their usual place of worship. It brought to her heart and conscience the subduing, inspiring, inward conviction that *God is*. He Himself did indeed manifest Himself inwardly to her heart.

She had been often troubled before this by a terrifying dream, that the sea was rushing in on her to sweep her away. The night of the day when that sermon brought the revelation of God to her heart, she once more had the old dream that the dreaded sea was rushing in on her; but this time there was no terror. She was lifted up beyond its reach.

Fifty years afterwards, on her dying bed, recurring to the same image, with triumphant joy she said—

“I feel the Rock *always* underneath me.”

The “Rock of Ages,” above the waves, to which her soul was lifted then.

And at another moment of that last illness she said to one of her daughters—

“I can say one thing: since my heart was touched, at seventeen years old, I believe I have never awakened from sleep, in sickness or in health, by day or by night, without my first waking thought being how best I might serve my Lord.”

Of these fifty intervening years between this awakening of faith and the awakening of death, so full of blessing to thousands, we will try to see a little of the secret spring as well as of the open service.

The morning after that sermon, the preacher, William Savery, came to see Elizabeth at her father's house. He spoke to her personally, and told her she was destined to a high and holy calling.

Five months afterwards a holy woman called Deborah Darby, in a religious meeting for prayer, spoke to the young girl and told her she was to be dedicated to God, and that she should be "a light to the blind, speech to the dumb, and feet to the lame."

Most amply was this promise fulfilled, as in after years Elizabeth Fry went her way among the blind and dumb and maimed in spirit, and brought to them from God, in the depths of their misery, light and strength and music in the heart.

The growth of these convictions into steady piety was slow, and the struggles she went through with temptations within and without were many and long, struggles with pride and vanity and idleness. She felt it right to dress very simply, and to give up many amusements, which led her, as she thought, to think too much of self.

But always the desire to serve her Lord remained predominant, to serve Him by succouring all around her, and more especially the ignorant, and needy, and lost.

She gathered the poor children near her father's house into a large laundry and taught them daily.

She went into an asylum for the insane to comfort a poor woman she had known, whose reason had given way.

Two years after this beginning of a new life, in 1800, when nineteen years of age, Elizabeth married Mr. Fry.

She bore him eleven children.

It was not until 1812, twelve years after her marriage, that the characteristic charitable work of her life, the visiting and succouring female criminals in prison, by which she is known throughout Christendom, began.

But throughout these twelve years she was practically learning more of the Christian faith, and of that humility as to herself in which she said all true religion has its root. And she was faithfully using every opportunity of serving and succouring all she could.

She took the greatest interest in her servants, and was the most devoted mother.

When they lived in London she used to visit in a court where the very poorest and most ignorant lived, called Irish Row. She would thread her way through children and pigs, and up broken staircases, to the people she sought, and listen to their stories of sorrow and difficulty. She helped them effectually in their poverty and hunger, and induced many to become more clean and orderly, and to

send their children to school, and grew to be dearly loved among them.

In their house in the country, near Flashet, in Essex, besides ministering to soul and body among the poor around her, she found her way to a camp of the wild, wandering people called gipsies, helped them with food and clothing, gave motherly advice and medicine for their sicknesses, and pleaded with them on the bitter evil of sin.

Always, we see, her attraction was towards the most miserable and outcast, as a mother to the sick child.

Meantime, she delighted in her garden, and made her home bright for her children, taught them, prayed with them, took walks in the woods and fields with them, and nourished in them the healthy pleasure she had herself in flowers and shells, and in all this beautiful world.

Yet, through all these blessings, and this fulness of life, a constant sense of her own weaknesses and deficiencies kept her humble and dependent on the Saviour, her "Holy Helper," as she loved to call Him. She thought others much better than herself, and a deep yearning was in her heart to render larger services for Christ's sake to the needy, sinful world He had redeemed.

And at last the long-waited-for opening to such service came.

In February, 1813, Mrs. Fry was asked by a friend to visit the women's side of the great prison of Newgate, to see if anything could be done to

alleviate the misery and to amend the moral condition of the wretched beings shut up there.

At that time the prisoners partly depended on the charity of acquaintances outside for food and clothing.

Three hundred women, with their young children, were shut up together in four rooms, without sufficient clothing, absolutely without any beds but the floor, in the cold winter, with no one to guide or control them, and with nothing to do. They were allowed to receive money, and to buy as much intoxicating drink as they liked in the prison.

The result was that those four rooms were like dens of wild beasts.

Depraved when they went in, the prison was to them a terrible school of iniquity. In their rags and dirt, they fought and swore, tore each other's clothes, robbed each other and any one who ventured near them; swore, gamed, and danced madly. The governor of the prison dreaded to approach their cells.

Into this den of iniquity Elizabeth Fry and her friend, Anna Buxton, fearlessly ventured; or, I should rather say, she ventured with a divine courage of pity which overcame her natural timidity.

Her dove-like face and majestic, matronly presence, her tender, gentle voice, so deep and sweet, which was the utterance of her strong and tender heart, made a calm in the clamour of oaths and quarrelling.

The poor Christian women knelt down and prayed. "I heard weeping," Mrs. Fry said, in describing it. "A very solemn quiet was observed. It was a very striking scene: the poor people on their knees around us in their deplorable condition."

This was the beginning of the work of the thirty remaining years of her life, a work which inspired and guided the amelioration of the prisons for women throughout Christendom.

Mrs. Fry went back to her home with a glow of pity in her heart for those wretched creatures, which never failed sweet, nor wasted itself in words.

She began with making woollen garments for them in her own house.

Four years afterwards an association of ladies was formed for the improvement of the female prisoners in Newgate. The authorities gave their sanction, and the ladies set to work.

The first thing they set on foot was a school for the children. They appealed to the mothers, and not in vain. Many of the poor women who had lost hope for themselves yet wept to think that their children might be saved from ruin. Many of them could not bear to hear their own oaths and curses caught up and repeated by baby lips.

The first schoolmistress was one of the prisoners, a girl who had been better educated than the rest. Some of the ladies lived through the day among the prisoners, until she could be trained for her work.

Through the children, many of the older women

were touched. Some of them begged to be allowed to learn with the little ones. Order began to move through the chaos.

The ladies devised a plan for employing and classifying the women.

The men in authority discouraged them. They said the prisoners would rebel, and any materials for work given them would be stolen.

Mrs. Fry only asked to be allowed to try. To this the authorities consented. Then the ladies called the women together, and frankly told them they could not be treated as children; if they were to be helped, they must enter into the plan heartily themselves.

One by one the different rules were proposed to them. There was to be a matron to superintend. The women were to be employed in needlework, knitting, or any other suitable employment. There was to be no begging, swearing, gaming, card-playing, quarrelling, or immoral conversation. All bad books were to be excluded. The most orderly among themselves were to be set over them as monitors. They were to come with clean hands and faces to their work, and be quiet while at work. Every morning and evening they were to be collected by the ringing of a bell to hear the Holy Scriptures read.

As each separate rule was read the women held up their hands in token of consent.

The gentlemen in office, though not hopeful themselves, trusted these Christian ladies, and

especially Mrs. Fry, and gave all the help they could; and the reformation was begun.

In a few weeks the magistrates came again, and saw the results of the effort.

The poor women were sitting quietly at work and listening to reading, decently dressed, with calm and cheerful faces.

The gentlemen acknowledged the change most gratefully.

They felt that it is indeed the mother's heart that gives the hope and patience needed to endure and save the naughty children of the world.

The endeavour was justified by proofs more difficult and enduring than gathering these poor idle, lost creatures to sit quietly at work hour by hour in the prison, clothed and in their right mind, much as that meant. For instance, the gambling, which was so ruinously exciting to all their bad passions, began after a time to creep in again. Gently, but firmly, Mrs. Fry spoke to them and told them how bad it was for them. And one by one five dirty packs of cards were separately given up to her by their owners.

Not a bit of the materials for work entrusted to them was stolen, or even wasted, and once a gold coin (a guinea) dropped accidentally was picked up by one of the women and restored to the matron.

And more than this, year after year, as time went on, Mrs. Fry had the joy of seeing those once abandoned by themselves and others as past hope restored to steady and useful life, won back heart

and soul to the God Who had redeemed them, and spreading peace and comfort through their homes and the world, instead of infecting all around them with moral pestilence.

From this first prison, these plans of helping the female prisoners, by Christian teaching and by employment, and by all kinds of sisterly sympathy and succour, spread throughout England and throughout Christendom.

Ladies of rank throughout Europe, queens, princesses, the Empress of Russia, and good women in every town which possessed a prison, sought to learn the methods which had so transformed the prison of Newgate in London. Associations of ladies were formed everywhere to work these plans out, and much good was done.

What was the secret by which so much effective power was called into action, and the promise of Elizabeth Fry's youth was so abundantly fulfilled, that she should be "eyes to the blind, a tongue to the dumb, and feet to the lame"?

It was the enkindling of hearts to pity and hope.

It was the yearning, motherly pity in a woman's heart for her lost sisters, fed by communion with the infinite pity in the heart of the Divine Saviour Who came to seek and to save the lost.

It was the undying hope implanted in a woman's heart for those of whom all despaired, and who despaired of themselves.

These poor prisoners were cast out as the refuse of the world. They had deserved and accepted the

position. They became refuse indeed, poisoning the air they breathed.

And suddenly, into the depths of their degradation, came down one of the purest and noblest of women, majestic with matronly beauty, with a voice of penetrating music. She came amongst them and spoke to them as children of the Heavenly Father, lost and sinful, indeed, but still His children, children He was yearning to welcome back to His heart.

No one had expected them to be anything but wild beasts, and wild beasts they became.

She expected them to become good women, and they began once more to be human. To two of the very worst, who had been pointed out to her as incorrigible, she went up quietly at the close of one of her Bible readings and addresses, and taking each of them by the hand, said to each—

“I trust I shall hear better things of thee.”

And both of them burst into tears.

No one had expected anything but curses from them. She knelt down and prayed with them, and they also knelt down and prayed and wept.

She read to them the holy words of Jesus about the father welcoming back the prodigal son, and their poor hearts, which at their worst had shrunk from seeing the babes learn to curse and swear, and become as depraved as their mothers, grew for the time soft as a child's.

This tender pity and inspiring hope were also combined with the sober wisdom and disciplined

patience of one whom God had been training through the trials of many years of faithful Christian living.

The poor lost women's hearts were indeed touched by the motherly pity bringing the message of divine mercy.

But the lowering, weakening habits of years had to be overcome. And to meet this, Mrs. Fry and the ladies associated with her induced the Government to adopt, and then perseveringly themselves carried out, all kinds of wise plans for separating the better-disposed from the worst, for employment, for rewarding steady labour, training them and teaching them like children, and yet doing everything possible to reawaken their self-respect as women.

It was the Christian faith in Elizabeth Fry which enabled her to combine all this; the faith which by its divine standard of perfect holiness makes the best feel themselves sinful, and by its Story of Redeeming, dying Love inspires hope of restoration in the worst; the faith which combines the freest forgiveness with the deepest penitence.

She never inquired about the past of these poor sinful women, never placed herself above them as one preaching to them from an inaccessible height. She stood beside them as one who herself had sinned, and needed forgiveness as they did.

"I never ask about their crimes," she said once to some one who inquired what such a woman had done; "we have all come short."

And most interesting it is to see (from her diary)

how, while as with mighty, motherly arms she brought back the wandering sheep, and bore them home on her heart, she herself as a tender lamb was borne in the arms of the Good Shepherd of all the flock of God; strong to continue His work, because she kept close to Himself.

The alternations of heroic labours and of fainting weakness, of external glories and humiliations in her life, are very striking. All through it is as if we could see the mighty hand of God, humbling and exalting, chastening and glorifying, by turns.

Princesses and queens sought to make her acquaintance, and delighted to do her honour. She sat an honoured guest at the table of kings. She was welcomed with homage in the highest society of all countries, for her work's sake, and for the charm of the calm and majestic bearing which moved equally the hearts of princes and of outcasts.

These honours may often be unsubstantial and fleeting, but for her they had a substance, because they were acknowledgments of noble work, and also helps towards achieving more.

In all her intercourse with those of the highest rank her purpose was always single. For *herself* she did not *receive*, but *give*; counsel earnestly sought by royal persons as to the education of their children, and the mode of lessening sin and misery in their dominions, messages of divine love and wisdom. If she sought anything from the great, it was for the wretched, the imprisoned

criminal, the lunatic, the persecuted, and the slave.

And at the very time when all this homage was rendered her, in the midst of the sunshine, the contrast of a chilling, dark shadow fell on her.

By no fault of hers her husband's wealth was lost. She had to leave the beautiful home she had so delighted in, to part with the carriage, and so double the fatigue of her journeys of service, just when her increasing age made such fatigue more trying ; she had also to forego the happiness of giving.

And there is also a deeper contrast of light and shadow in the inward spiritual life.

Her diary shows her to have often inwardly dwelt in deep humiliation and sometimes even depression. She habitually felt others so much better than herself. She felt herself so far below her own ideal of faith and love.

And all the while a power was given her far more exalting than any mere external honours, a real moral and spiritual *power* to succour and to bless which was like that of a strong angel.

She went into the condemned cell, to the poor doomed women who could not be kept quiet by any force. She took the poor hands, cold as with the perspiration of death, into her own, and spoke strong, tender words of Christian forgiveness and pity, till the frame, trembling all over, and the poor troubled soul, became calmed. Again and again she rendered service such as this, at the

cost of sleepless nights of horror to herself, taking as it were, the burden on herself; and not only did she thus console the condemned persons, but was able by degrees to move those in power to the softening of the laws, which were at that period very harsh in the infliction of capital punishment.

She went to the convict-ship in which criminals were at that time transported beyond the seas. On the deck she read in her musical voice a passage from the Holy Scriptures, and then knelt down on the deck, while the poor convict-women wept bitterly, and the sailors, who had climbed the rigging of the ships around, listened with tears in their eyes, and followed her with their blessings. And by this means she moved, not only the guilty women present to repentance and hope, and the crowd who stood round to a momentary pity; she was setting afloat a movement, a philanthropic agency, which provided matrons to watch over the criminals during their voyage, made the ships which had been scenes of riot and sin training schools for good, and was ready to meet the convicts when they disembarked and help them to begin life anew.

She climbed up into ruinous garrets, and down into noisome dungeons, where desperate persons were kept chained to iron bars, and not only softened desperate men and women for the time by her pitiful presence, but helped to introduce a more merciful system throughout all the prisons. At her intercession the irons were knocked off some

hundreds of captives, cruelly fettered in a German prison.

In one lunatic asylum among the many she entered, an unhappy woman lay grovelling in straw. Whether the look of compassion or the voice attracted her cannot be known, but she dragged herself as far as her chain would allow towards her motherly visitant, and tried to reach her. Elizabeth Fry stretched out her hand to her. She kissed it again and again, and burst into an agony of tears. And that tender touch and voice of hers reached not only that poor bewildered heart and brain, but the heart of Christendom, which was moved to a tenderer and more hopeful treatment of those afflicted with the direst of bodily maladies, the insane.

She went, sanctioned by Government, into remote provincial towns, inspecting and improving prisons and prisoners.

For instance, in one country town an order came one day to an old-fashioned official to let her see the town jail. The old gentleman indignantly exclaimed that women had no business to interfere in such matters, and he would have nothing to do with it. Scarcely had he said so, when a knock at the door announced Mrs. Fry herself. She entered with the two gentlemen, her friends, who accompanied her, and quietly taking the dismayed official's sympathy for granted, said gently, "Friend, thou wilt show me the prison."

Conquered by her calm, dignified presence, and

of confidence in his good-will, he weekly issued
various remonstrances, and led the way.

The King was the prisoner there, in a most
desolate solitary chamber of an old castle, quite
out of the common population.

One evil day, or in a few days an order came
from the Minister of State that no human being
should ever return to that prison again.

After a committee at the House of Commons,
and one in the House of Lords, she gave, when
questioned the minister and force none who saw it
had any such evidence so clear and suggestive,
the King was to be executed in the concerning the
laws concerning the empire.

And at the same time as I have said, in con-
cerning the same laws in various records, we find her
name in one in the valley air of the valley
of the valley of the valley with a sense of her own
name in the valley, thinking she did and
the valley.

Having referred these brief biographical sketches,
to the present to justify the achievements
in the valley which we recurred. The long
hours in which we repare for the work, the
impressions we with which empty the head of
the valley that we are able to receive the grace
which we in the valley make the good
which we in the valley which make the good
which we in the valley are incessantly passed over
completely unnoticed.

With reference to these public works of Elizabeth

Fry was ever flowing a quiet, fresh stream of home-life, overflowing in ceaseless little acts of lovingkindness to all around her.

Once, driving in her carriage, she saw a poor carter lying wounded beside his cart. She instantly alighted, went up to him, and bound up the bleeding head as if he had been her own son.

Another time, in a crowded thoroughfare, a poor wretched woman was hurrying wildly past her in the street. Something in the woman's bearing moved her heart, always "at leisure from itself, to soothe and sympathize."

"Thou appearest to be in trouble," she said. "Tell me, I beseech thee, the cause of thy sorrow. Perhaps I can assist thee and afford thee relief."

The woman could not resist; her heart opened. She was so miserable that she was about to drown herself in the river, when that tender voice thus arrested her, and won her back to life and hope.

She was most dearly cherished and honoured by all her numerous kindred, husband, children, grandchildren, brothers, sisters, and nieces. In sickness, no one could nurse as she could. She stooped to the humblest services. Her very presence was calming; her soft hand, her exquisite reading, her "delicious company," her wonderful power of hoping, cheered and sustained as none else could.

Dignified and majestic as she was, with children she could ever be as a child; mother and child in one, entering quite really into their innocent

delights in flowers and fields, gardens and seashores, and country ramblees, with leading them on to love, as she did, the service of the poor and suffering.

Very firm in her own convictions, she learned more and more the true tolerance of love, and of a large belief in the divine leading of different hearts by different ways to the same divine end. She had once longed that all she loved should see exactly as she saw. But, as she says at last, her prayer had come to be, "*In my ways, or by any paths, Thou nayest see me.*"

Her intolerance was only for unkindness, for intolerance itself.

One of her young cousins had been speaking very indignantly against some one.

"Has thou nothing good to say of her?" was the gentle rebuke.

Her life of Christian love and service solved for the heart many a controversy only embittered by intellectual debate.

She was once visiting a community of good women of a different section of Christendom from her own. She had gone over the prison they took care of, and had admired their plans; and afterwards the sisters were sitting around, listening while she spoke a few words of Christian faith, as to "sisters in Christ."

She ended with warning them not to think any good works of theirs "meritorious," deeming this their peculiar danger.

Here the lady at the head of the community interposed.

“Oh no ; but there is merit !” she said ; “there is merit in what man does.”

“My mother,” replied one of the aged sisters, “madame” (*i.e.* Mrs. Fry) “thinks that if the love of God does not sufficiently animate the heart to do it, *without feeling it a merit or desiring reward*, it falls short.”

“Ah, that is well,” rejoined the Lady Superior ; “how good she is !”

And so among them, unconsciously, they seem to have solved practically a controversy of centuries.

But the time came when the beautiful life, overflowing with love to all, had to overflow into the life unseen and eternal.

Her “latter days,” she said, were the “better days.” The “Rock of Ages” was always underneath.

Yet wave after wave of sorrow came over her, breaking ever nearer to the innermost citadel of the soul. Wealth, with its power of giving succour, and of lessening the fatigue and strain of life, had long since been withdrawn.

Her beloved, old and young, the strong, supporting arms of her contemporary kindred, brothers and sisters, were taken from her, and also many of the children and grandchildren, who were the stay and joy of her old age, the darlings of her affectionate heart.

And lastly, “flesh and heart failed ;” her natural

beauty gave way ; the overstrained nerves caused the spirit utterable suffering. She who had been the stay of all, became dependent on all. "Helpless and suffering in body, enfeebled in memory, all that could be shaken tottering to its base," the strong, steadfast will broken, those who had leant on her, and who loved her the most devotedly, grew to be ready that she should cease to suffer.

"Flesh and heart failed," but "God was indeed the stay of her heart, and her portion for ever." To the end, her spirit, her real being, the love which was her very self, remained the same.

"What should I be without Him ?" she said. "Even in sleep, I think the heart is ever lifted up. It is, if I may say it, living in constant communion with Christ." "The confidence has never left me that all would be well, if not in time, in eternity." "I never lose the feeling of this. I am always on the Rock."

She had greatly dreaded the act of dying. That dread was passing now, as she had said she knew it would, in mercy to her tender and timid nature.

And to the end she tenderly recognized every little service rendered her.

One little grandson was her especial delight. He always came and read the Bible to her when she awoke in the morning ; and she used to encourage him to draw, and teach him to love flowers and shells, and to speak to him of Christ.

She used to be wheeled out in her chair to the sea-shore, and the feeble hands still gave little

books to the poor sailors, who knew and honoured her for her labours of love.

And so, through the decay of all else, love lived on and glowed to the end, in trust towards God, and in patience and service towards men.

She had especially dreaded dying, like many in whom the power of life is especially strong. That dread was now, as has been said, passing away. Whatever of it lingered would, she said, she knew be removed when the time drew near.

At last the summons came.

At six o'clock on the morning of one Sunday in October, 1845, she said to the faithful servant who waited on her—

“Mary, dear Mary, I am very ill.”

And then—

“Pray for me. It is a strift; but I am safe.”

And after a little while, one of her daughters being there, sitting beside her bed, she said—

“Oh, my dear Lord! help and keep Thy servant.”

Her daughter read the words of the ancient Holy Scriptures :

“I the Lord God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.”

One bright glance of intelligence and recognition passed over her face as the dear familiar voice uttered the familiar words. It was the last.

As she had desired, unconsciously, she passed through the dark valley, and was at rest.

CONCLUSION.

THE stream of Christian life from which we have drawn these living waters, is flowing on as mightily and fresh as ever.

At the moment I write, a biography is just now illumining us with a light of a life as deep in its spiritual source, and as wonderful in its work of blessing, as any throughout the ages we have traced.

A beautiful, noble woman has just died out of our sight, and is filling the whole house of the Church once more with the fragrance of the ointment poured from the broken alabaster on the Saviour's feet.

Dorothy Pattison, "Sister Dora," was, little more than a year since (November, 1878), closing with the triumphant patience of eleven weeks of agonized suffering her thirteen years of victorious battling against sin and sickness.

Beautiful and beloved, called by her father the "sunshine" of her home, she became, as a devoted nurse in an hospital, the sunshine of many

suffering men and women. For months she was alone in a small-pox hospital; day and night she was ready for every want of her patients, dressing the most loathsome wounds, bandaging fractures with the skill of an experienced surgeon, loving the little children, and pitying them so that she would have two poor babies, suffering from dreadful burns, sleeping by her side at night, that she might be close at hand to do anything they needed; the sunshine of her beauty and gaiety, and her unwearying sympathy, cheering the sufferers amidst their pain like the gentlest mother; literally saving crushed limbs, almost given up as hopelessly injured, by her skilful, ceaseless nursing, and by the hope she inspired; and through all those untiring bodily labours ever also healing broken hearts, and winning back lost souls to the Saviour and Healer of men.

Gifted indeed she was, extraordinarily, with beauty and wit, with strength of body and of will. But her gaiety of spirit, her sympathy, undimmed by the constant sight of suffering, her unconquerable self-devotion, her hope and faith and love, were nourished at the old sacred, secret springs.

“She never touched a wound,” the friend who writes about her says, “without lifting up her heart to the Giver of all virtue, and asking that healing might be conveyed by her means; she never set a fracture without a prayer that through her instrumentality the limb might unite.”

She firmly held to the supernatural power put

into the hands of men by means of the weapon of prayer.

It was the rich "bread" from the "mouth of God" on which her spirit fed. She always carried a small Bible in her pocket to read at all times, and one who saw it can never forget the unearthly light on her face as she read it. It was the old sacred feast of the Holy Communion which was her joy.

There was the old humility as to herself. "Oh, don't talk about my life. If you knew it you would be down on your knees, crying for mercy on me, a sinner."

It was indeed the old immortal "*unto Me*" which made the under-current of music in her heart through all.

"My heart is running over with thankfulness, and as I toil on I seem to hear the still small voice, 'Ye did it *unto Me*.'"

It was the old divine and human likeness of the dying, living Lord that shone through her.

It was the old, unconquerable Christian hope of redemption for the very lowest. She never despaired of any. "This enabled her," as her friend writes, "to see the image of God, defiled and darkened though it might be, impressed on every living soul, to feel her kinship with it, and to lay her hand, not on the defilements and impurity, but, through her infinite love and tenderness, on the one spot yet capable of being reached, thus kindling the faintest spark into a living flame."

And for her, when the time came, it was the old welcome at the heavenly gates of life, which on this side we call death.

"*I see Him there,*" she said when dying; "the gates are opened wide."

And so the stories I have to tell you now have come to an end.

No cold grave-stones are these memorials, but sun-pictures of our beloved ones who are withdrawn from our sight for a time, but whom we hope one day to see. No records are they of the triumphs of a power grown feeble, or of a Creed grown obsolete. They are but leaves from the tree of life which is for the healing of the nations, always life and always healing, whether found in the chilliest zones of Christendom or in the most tangled wildernesses of its tropical luxuriance.

We have gone, have we not, as we intended, into home after home, and have seen how the divine life has entered there, the life of divine love and faith and hope, life in Him Who is our life, and made conquests within and around of discord and despair and sin.

We have seen this life of love, adoring and serving, manifested in women of all classes and characters, shining from the quiet depths of homes in blessing on all around, diffusing through the wide world the love which is the light of the home, seeking, saving, serving.

Let us go over the names once more.

Mary, the blessed Virgin-mother of our Lord, standing with the resolute Magdalene, together, by the cross: the first communication of redemption given to the blessed virgin of Nazareth, the first song of redemption uttered by her lips; the first glad tidings of the resurrection given through the Magdalene: the minister box of precious ointment, welcomed alike from the penitent sinner and from the gentle sister of the beloved family of Bethany; Dorcas, first of the noble Army of Charity; Eunice, pattern of Christian mothers, with Lois, the aged grandmother, teaching the Holy Scriptures to the boy Timothy; Anna, turning the loneliness of widowhood into the fitness of the life of intercession in the Temple; Lydia, generous hostess of the persecuted apostles; Priscilla, the wife, never mentioned apart from her husband Aquila, sharing his perils and his work, from the humblest toils at his craft, to the intellectual and spiritual enlightenment of the eloquent Apollos; Blandina, sustaining others by her faith and courage, whilst being herself tortured to death; Perpetua, the noble young matron, martyred with Felicitas the slave, by lowliest services, whilst herself dying, sustaining the dying slave; Monica, doubly mother of her son Augustine, the great Father of the Church, whom she bore, and won back to true life by her example and her prayers; the queenly Abbess Hilda, royally discovering and directing to their true aims the gifts of all around her; Prascovia, the devoted daughter, inspired and sustained by prayer, fear-

lessly crossing dreary wildernesses to save her father from exile; Lady Rachel Russell, dear and devoted wife, dearest of all to her husband through her succour to him in death; Madame Elizabeth of France, sister and aunt, rejoicing to be always second, her life one ceaseless, unconscious, glad sacrifice of self to those she loved; Catharine Tait, wife of the archbishop, combining in her fruitful life so many blessed types of womanhood—wife, mother, servant of the poor, hostess of the Church. And then the great Army of Charity: the young royal Elizabeth of Hungary, leaving her palaces in her happy days to serve with her own hands the sick in the hospitals she founded; Catharine, daughter of the dyer of Siena, succouring cities and reconciling princes; Joan of Arc, stopping the cruel wars of a hundred years by the “great pity” in her life and death; Hannah More, with the company of faithful teachers, sweet singers, and pleasant, wholesome story-tellers; Sarah Martin, the poor solitary dressmaker; Mrs. Fry, the tender, majestic matron; Sister Dora, in the strength and beauty of her fulness of life; ministering to the sick, seeking and saving the sinful, and inspiring Christendom with the pity for the suffering and the lost which glowed in their own hearts.

And these, we must always remember, are no exceptional portraits of an exceptional aristocratic caste of inimitable saints. They are specimens of the universal Christian life demanded of us all, lived by not a few; not perfect, indeed, but being

perfected ; not, indeed, complete in any one ; complete only in Him Who is the Head and Life of all, and in His whole Body, which is the Church.

Nor, thank God, are they records of a race and a life passed away.

At this moment I could lead you into home after home around us now, blessed and hallowed by lives as Christ-like and humble and sweet.

I could show you, one after another, maiden and matron, young and aged, poor and princely, going forth into the world to nurse the sick, to raise the fallen, to teach the ignorant, to succour the needy, to save the sinful and the lost. And all alike inspired by the one sacrifice of Jesus, the Son of God ; all, in the lowliest services as in the extremest agonies, strengthened by His imperishable "unto Me ;" all, indeed, not so much consciously following His footsteps, as actually living out the life of Him Who "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many," "to seek and save that which was lost ;" Who gave not the worlds He created, nor even only the life-blood of His human heart for us, but Himself, to redeem us to God.

APPENDIX.

THE WOMEN OF THE GOSPELS.*

MARY THE MOTHER OF JESUS.

I.

“All generations shall call me blessed.”

Age after age has called thee blessed,
Yet none have fathomed all thy bliss ;
Mothers, who read the secret best,
Or angels,—yet its depths must miss.

To dwell at home with Him for years,
And prove His filial love thine own ;
In all a mother’s tender cares
To serve thy Saviour in thy Son !

To see before thee day by day
That perfect life expand and shine,
And learn by sight, as angels may,
All that is holy and Divine !

* From “The Women of the Gospels and other Poems,” by
the Author of “Chronicles of the Schönberg-Cotta Family.”

Tell not me keep thy blessing up
 From age to age, from land to land,
 Since 'twas himself that breaming cup
 Divers'd the Christian's hand,
 The measure of a blessedness
 Not by man measured unexpressed:
 Sealing the master's joy with "Fox,"
 The Disciple's with His "ruler blessed."

22

THE WEDDING AT CANA.

"Ye have heard of the wise man the word of God, and
 keep it."

Ye for yourself thy judgment,
 Ye for thy house the breamspring;
 For that that, are the higher good
 Must come straight out of lower things.

The village home so sweet to thee
 With joys so fullblown and complete,
 The him in Jacob's house could be,
 He least in thy master's feet.

The will long mouldy bowed to thine
 Now suddenly claims its sovereign place,
 And takes a range of lone Périne
 The mortal vision cannot trace.

On us that mild reproof falls cold.—
 The words and not the tone, we hear:
 On thee, who knewest Him of old,
 It casts no shade of doubt or fear.

For thy meek heart has read Him true,
And, bowing, wins His "*rather blessed*,"
"Whate'er He saith unto you, do,"
Embracing as its rule and rest.

Then through earth's ruins heaven shines bright :
The widest sphere, the dearest home,
Save that where Christ is Lord and Light,
Were but at last the spirit's tomb.

Thus, laying down thy special bliss,
Thou winnest joy, all joy above,—
The endless joy of being His,
And sharing in His works of love.

III.

THE MARRIAGE AT CANA.

THE Hand that strews the earth with flowers
Enriched the marriage feast with wine ;
The Hand once pierced for sins of ours
This morning made the dew-drops shine ;

Makes rain-clouds palaces of art,
Makes ice-drops beauteous as they freeze ;
The Heart that bled to save,—that Heart
Sends countless gifts each day to please ;

Spares no minute refining touch
To paint the flower, to crown the feast,
Deeming no sacrifice too much,—
Has care and leisure for the least ;

Gives freely of its very best,
Not barely what the need may be,
But for the joy of making blest.—
Teach us to love and give like Thee !

Not narrowly men's claims to measure,
But question daily all our powers :
To whose cup can we add a pleasure ?
Whose path can we make bright with flowers ?

IV.

THE CROSS.

“Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother.”

THE strongest light casts deepest shade,
The dearest love makes dreariest loss ;
And she His birth so blest had made
Stood by Him dying on the cross.

Yet, since not grief but joy shall last,
The day and not the night abide,
And all time's shadows, earthward cast,
Are lights upon the “other side ;”

Through what long bliss that shall not fail,
That darkest hour shall brighten on !
Better than any angel's “*Hail !*”
The memory of “*Behold thy son !*”

Blest in thy lowly heart to store
The homage paid at Bethlehem,
But far more blessed evermore
Thus to have shared the taunts and shame ;

Thus with thy pierced heart to have stood
'Mid mocking crowds, and owned Him thine ;
True through a world's ingratitude,
And owned in death by lips Divine.

V.

THE CROWN.

Thou shalt be crowned, O mother blest !
Our hearts behold thee crowned e'en now ;
The crown of motherhood, earth's best,
O'ershadowing thy maiden brow.

Thou shalt be crowned ! More fragrant bays
Than ever poet's brows entwine,
For thine immortal hymn of praise,
First Singer of the Church, are thine.

Thou shalt be crowned ! All earth and heaven
Thy coronation pomp shall see ;
The Hand by which thy crown is given
Shall be no stranger's hand to thee.

Thou shalt be crowned ! But not a queen ;
A better triumph ends thy strife :
Heaven's bridal raiment, white and clean,
The victor's crown of fadeless life.

Thou shalt be crowned ! But not alone,
No lonely pomp shall weigh thee down ;
Crowned with the myriads round His throne,
And casting at His feet thy crown.

MARY MAGDALENE.

I.

HER home lay by that inland sea
Which sacred memories so embalm :
That Magdala and Galilee
Ring like the music of a psalm.

Deep in the lake the far hills glow,
Clear shine each peak and golden spire,
And Hermon lifts his brow of snow
Unsullied to that sky of fire.

From point to point gleamed cities white,
Full of the joyous stir of life,
And o'er the waves boats bounded light ;
All was with eager movement rife.

Fresh streams across Gennesaret danced,
Laughing with corn and countless fruits,
And met the quiet waves which glanced
Bathing the oleander roots.

Yet many a calm recess for prayer
Those hills enshrined which circling stood,
Wild steeps which to men's homes brought near
The sanctity of solitude.

But vainly, round her and beneath
Earth poured her wealth, as evermore
Flows Jordan to the Sea of Death,
And leaves it bitter as before.

II.

“Out of whom He cast seven devils.”

No phantoms thus her soul assailed,
It was no vision of the night,
No dim unreal mist, that veiled
The glad reality of light;

No discord of sweet strings unstrung
A skilful touch might tune again,
No jar of nerves too tightly wrung,
No shadows of an o'erwrought brain;

But din of mocking voices rude,
Spirits whose touches left a stain,
Owning no shrine of solitude
Their blasphemies might not profane:

Real as the earth she, hopeless, trod,
Real as the heaven they had lost,
Real as the soul they kept from God,
From torture still to torture tossed.

Thus sleep to her could bring no calm,
No stillness dwelt for her in night;
And human love could yield no balm,
And home no deep and pure delight;

Till light upon that chaos broke,—
Not from unconscious azure skies,—
The morning that her spirit woke
Beamed from the depths of human eyes.

No thunder, with God's vengeance dread,
Scattered that company of hell;
It was a Voice from which they fled,
A Voice they knew before they fell.

Once more she was alone and free,
And silence all her soul possessed;
As the "great calm" the storm-tossed sea
When the same Voice commanded rest.

Such solitude a heaven might make,
Such silence had for bliss sufficed;
What was it, then, from hell to wake,
And wake beneath the smile of Christ!

III.

"And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary, called Magdalene, . . . which ministered unto Him of their substance."

He suffered her with Him to stay,—
This crowning joy was not denied,—
To hear His voice from day to day,
And tread this earth still by His side:

Where, with a diadem of snow,
The white-walled cities crowned the rocks,
Or peasants' dwellings far below,
Couched round the fountains like their flocks.

She saw the expressive glance of sight
The dulness of blind eyes replace;
When learning first the joy of light,
For the first sight they saw His face.

She heard the first clear accents pour
From dumb lips, uttering His name ;
She saw men's homes from shore to shore
Break into sunshine where He came.

She saw the long-possessed set free,
She knew the anguish and the bliss ;
She saw the baffled Pharisee,
And felt, " Man never spake like this."

She heard reluctant fiends confess
The Godhead they had fain denied ;
She saw the little children press
With fearless fondness to His side.

She saw the speechless joy that day
Light up the widow's face at Nain ;
She never saw one sent away,
She never heard one plead in vain.

She saw Him faint and wearied sore,
And toil those gracious eyes bedim,
Thirsting and hungered, homeless, poor,—
She saw and ministered to Him.

She saw His brow its light regain,
And strength reknit each wearied limb,
All to be spent for man again ;—
A woman's service succoured Him !

And are those days for ever o'er ?
Must earth be of that joy bereft ?—
The sights and sounds are here no more,
And yet the very best is left.

Item. THE WOMEN OF THE GOSPEL.

Not, may we follow in His way.

Not, read this earth as by His side.

May we, Him, work from day to day.

In His presence we abide :

Nor Him, save, light on darkened eyes.

The broken, and tattered heart set free :

May succour, serve, and sacrifice.

But, hear, from heaven His " *mini Me* ".

IV.

"The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, while it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre."

The Sabbath that could bring no rest.

The weary day at length had fled :

What Sabbath could again be blest.

Since He Who promised rest was dead ?

The guilty world was brooded in gloom,

Night on its sleeping millions lay

Like the "great stone" upon His tomb—

What if it never rolled away !

But over her path there fell a shade

No darkness from her heart could hide :—

The tomb in which the Lord was laid

Was near the cross on which He died.

Beneath that cross she stood again :

The tortured form no more she saw ;

His murderers were religious men,

Nor dropped one letter of the law :

His cry of agony might smite
Strange discord through their measured prayer ;
And who, when death those lips made white,
Could silence the reproaches there ?

Thus Earth among the spheres moved on,
And calmly kept her ordered course,
Bearing the cross of God the Son,
And in her heart His lifeless corpse :

Nor yet was blotted out of space,
Nor yet the brand of Cain doth bear ;
Because, through His surpassing grace,
That cross pleads not “Avenge,” but “Spare.”

V.

“ They have taken away my Lord.”

“ My Lord,” though dead, yet still “ my Lord : ”
Prophet through love’s tenacity,
Powerless to hope, she yet adored,
And felt the truth she could not see.

If He Who in Himself had shone
All that God is, all man may be,
Living the truth else guessed by none,
Through years of patient ministry ;

He from Whom life and peace she drew,
Whom she had followed day by day,
And worshipped more, the more she knew,
Could fade to cold unconscious clay ;

If that pure life of perfect love,
Extinguished, never more should beam,
What joy could endless days above
Bring evermore, not bringing Him ?

What were those angel-forms to her,
Their radiant forms and raiment white,
If dead within a sepulchre
He lay, Himself the Life and Light ?

Thus when the bridge of faith was rent,
Which could have firmly spanned the gulf,
Love prostrate o'er the chasm leant,
And bridged the dark abyss herself.

VI.

“Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself and saith unto Him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.”

A MOMENT since, a sepulchre
Was all the world she cared to own,
An empty tomb, vain balms and myrrh,
Tears with no heart to shed them on.

And now the living Lord was there,
Immortal, glorious, yet the same ;
The Voice the fiends once fled in fear
Now spoke the old familiar name.

No language could that bliss have told,
She had no words the joy to greet ;
She said but “Master !” as of old,
And rested silent at His feet.

Yet all heaven's choirs could scarcely twine
A music more profound and sweet
Than when, as from His heart to thine,
Thus "Mary!" and "Rabboni!" meet.

VII.

"Go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen."

TELL all the world the Lord is risen—
The Easter message, ever new;
The grave is but a ruined prison,—
Invincible, the Life breaks through.

Earth cannot long ensepulchre
In her dark depths the tiniest seed;
When life begins to throb and stir,
The bands of death are weak indeed.

No clods its upward course deter,
Calmly it makes its path to day;
One germ of life is mightier
Than a whole universe of clay.

Yet not one leaf-blade ever stirred,
Bursting earth's wintry dungeons dim,
But lived at His creative word,
Responsive to the life in Him.

Since, then, the life that He bestows
Thus triumphs over death and earth;
What power of earth or death can close
The Fountain whence all life has birth?

And, as the least up-springing grain
Breathes still the resurrection song,
That light the victory shall gain,
That death is weak, and life is strong;

So, with immortal vigour rife,
The lowliest life that faith has freed
Bears witness still that Christ is life,
And that the Life is risen indeed.

THE SISTERS OF BETHANY.

I.

en He had heard, therefore, that he was sick, He abode two days still in the same place where He was."

WHAT hope lit up those sisters' gloom,
When first they sent His help to crave,
So sure that, hearing, He would come,
And, coming, could not fail to save !

Counting the distance o'er again,
Deeming Him near and yet more near ;
Till hope, on heights she climbed in vain,
Lay frozen to a death-like fear :

Watching with twofold strain intent
The expected steps, the failing breath,
Till hope and fear, together spent,
Sank in the common blank of death.

" Beyond this burning waste of hills,
Beyond that awful glittering sea,
'Mid those blue mountains lingering still,
Have our faint prayers not reached to Thee ?

" Or are the joys and griefs of earth
To Thee, Whose eyes survey the whole,
But passing things of little worth,
That should not deeply stir the soul ? "

His tears ere long shall hush that fear
For every mourning heart for ever ;
And we, who now His words can hear
Beyond the hills, beyond the river,

Know that as true a watch He kept
On those far heights, as at their side,
Feeling the tears the sisters wept,
Marking the hour the brother died.

No faintest sigh His heart can miss ;
E'en now His feet are on the way,
With richest counter-weight of bliss
Heaped up for every hour's delay ;

That nevermore should hope deferred
Make sick the heart which trusts in Him,
But, nourished by His faithful Word,
Grow brighter still as sight grows dim.

II.

“She hath done what she could. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.”

MARY, the only glory sweet
To any Christian's heart is thine !
Hidden beside the Master's feet,
Lost in that dearer light to shine ;

Whilst evermore the heart obeys
The sermon of thy listening looks,
Learning religion from thy gaze
Better than from a thousand books.

Thy silence is His sweetest psalm,
While from His lips thy name distils,
And, dropping like thy precious balm,
Ever His house with fragrance fills.

III.

“Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”

WHAT joy to live beneath the eyes
Which looked the spirit “through and through,”
Which penetrated each disguise,
And would not let us be untrue;

Yet through the thickest veil descried
The little spring of good below,
And pierced the icy crust of pride,
That happy, humble tears might flow;

Rending each soft disguise, which spares
The evil thing by gentle name,—
For sinners founts of pitying tears,
But for the sin unquenchèd flame;

That saw the very spot within
On which to lay the healing touch ;
That had no pity for the sin,
Because for those who sinned so much ;

That marked through Peter's boast his dread,
Yet, by his curses unperplexed,
Looked through them to the light, and read
The traces of the earlier text ;

Beneath the black "*I know Him not,*"
,, *Thou know'st I love Thee*" still could trace,
In graven characters inwrought,
No darkest stains could quite efface ;

That knew, through all vibrations fixed,
The true direction of the will,—
Saw self with Martha's service mixed,
And love in Mary's sitting still.

Those eyes still watch us, not from far,
Still pitying "look us through and through,"
And through the broken sketch we are,
Foresee the heavenly likeness true ;

Through all its soft and silken dress
The creature of the dust descry,
Yet 'neath the shapeless chrysalis
The Psyche moulding for the sky.

THE UNNAMED WOMAN.

I.

The hand that might have drawn aside
The veil, which from unloving sight
Those shrinking forms avails to hide,
With tender care has wrapped it tight.

He would not have the sullied name
Once fondly spoken in a home,
A mark for strangers' righteous blame,
Branded through every age to come.

And thus we only speak of them
As those on whom His mercies meet,—
“She whom the Lord would not condemn,”
And “She who bathed with tears His feet.”

Trusted to no evangelist,
First heard where sins no more defile,
Read from the Book of Life by Christ,
And consecrated by His smile.

II.

“ And stood at His feet behind Him weeping, and began to wash
His feet with tears.”

SHE bathed His feet with many a tear,
Feet wearied then for us so oft ;
She wiped them with her flowing hair,
Embalmed with reverent touches soft.

She knew not of the bitter way
Those sacred feet had yet to tread,
Nor how the nails would pierce one day
Where now her costly balms were shed.

She read the pity in His eyes,
To peace transmuting her despair ;
She could not read what agonies
Must cloud the heaven she gazed on there.

He praised her love, her sacrifice,
But breathed not what His own must be,
Nor hinted what must be the price
Which made her pardon flow so free.

Then if her love and gifts were such,
Who little knew the depths of His ;
If then indeed she “ *loved* ” Him “ *much* ”,
How, since she knows Him as He is ?

III.

“He turned to the woman.”

“*He turned to her.*” All eyes beside,—
All other eyes of righteous men,—
Avoided hers with virtuous pride,
Nor could she meet their gaze again.

Nor could she deem their coldness wrong;
That virtue of the Pharisee,
Only in its negations strong,
Ceasing to freeze might cease to be.

And human virtues can but be
As tender flowers a touch may kill,
Scorched if winds breathe too fervently,
Nipped if they chance to blow too chill.

But His were of another sphere
That never stain nor change could know,
No earth-born flowers, however fair,
But the pure light which made them grow;

No ice pure only till it melt,
But streams most fresh in freest flow;
The living love, whose pureness dwelt
Not in its coldness but its glow.

IV.

“ She hath washed My feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. . . . This woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss My feet. . . . Hath anointed My feet with ointment. . . . She loved much.”

He prized her love. He held it dear,
He felt each ministering touch,
He marked each gift she offered there,
He cared that she should love Him “ *much*.”

His pity was no careless alms
The happy to the wretched fling;
He prized her love, her tears, her balms;—
Then life was yet a precious thing!

Precious the love He held of price,
Precious each moment which might bring
Some privilege of sacrifice,
Some vase to break in offering.

And God gives evermore like this,
Gives by His measure, not by ours;
By life means not mere *being*, but *bliss*,
Free exercise of joyful powers.

The freedom with which He makes free
Is freedom of His home above;
Not merely liberty to *be*,
But liberty to serve and love.

V.

“Thy sins are forgiven thee.”

“FORGIVENESS may then yet be mine,
The sinless lips have said ‘*Forgiven* ;’
Pardon is then a right Divine,
And love indeed the law of heaven.

“But can the sullied snow grow white ?
What spell can seal the memory fast ?
What has been ever must *have been*,
The Almighty cannot change the past.

“His eyes, though piercing as the light,
In pity may refuse to see ;
But what can make my memory white ?
What veil can hide myself from me ?”

Oh ! raise thy downcast eyes to His,
And read the blessed secret there ;
The pardoning love from guilt that frees,
By loving thee shall make thee fair.

Love’s deepest depth of saving woe
Has yet to be to thee revealed ;
Blood from that tender heart must flow,
And thus thy bitter streams be healed.

Thy guilt and shame on Him must lie :
Then search the past thy guilt to see ;
Instead, this sight shall meet thine eye,—
Thy Saviour on the cross for thee !

VI.

"Go in peace."

W^e clothe thy soul in spotless dress,
In bridal raiment white and clean,
The spirit's bridal robe of peace,
Sign of the inward grace unseen.

The love that sweeps thy spirit o'er,
Effacing every stain of sin,
Flows through thy spirit evermore,
A well of heavenly life within.

Thus, hallowed names, forgotten long,
Familiar names which once were thine,
With all the old attraction strong,
Embrace thy soul from lips Divine.

Soft from a Father's house above
Floats down on thee the name of child,
From love beyond the mother's love
Which on thy guiltless childhood smiled.

And when the age its circuit ends,
And the great marriage-day is there,
And from the heavens a Bride descends,
Thou, clothed in white, the bliss shalt share.

THE TWO ALABASTER BOXES.

I.

“A woman in the city, which was a sinner, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and anointed His feet.”

“Being in Bethany, there came a woman, having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard, very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on His head.”

WHEN Thou, in patient ministry,
Didst pass a stranger through Thy land,
Two costly gifts were offered Thee,
And each was from a woman's hand.

To Thee, Who madest all things fair,
Twice fair and precious things they bring:—
Pure sculptured alabaster clear,
Perfumes for earth's anointed King.

Man's hasty lips would both reprove,—
One for the stain of too much sin,
One for the waste of too much love;
Yet both availed Thy smile to win.

The saint who listened at Thy feet,
The sinner sinners scorned to touch,
Adoring in Thy presence meet,
Both pardoned and both loving much.

Thus evermore to all they teach,
Man's highest style is "much forgiven;"
And that earth's lowest yet may reach
The highest ministries of heaven.

They teach that gifts of costliest price
From hearts sin-beggared yet may pour;
And that love's costliest sacrifice
Is worth the love, and nothing more.

II.

Love is the true economist.
Her weights and measures pass in heaven;
What others lavish on the feast,
She to the Lord Himself hath given.

Love is the true economist.
She through all else to Him hath sped,
And unreproved His feet hath kissed,
And spent her ointments on His head.

Love is the true economist,
She breaks the box, and gives her all;
Yet not one precious drop is missed,
Since on His head and feet they fall.

In all her fervent zeal no haste,
She at His feet sits glad and calm;
In all her lavish gifts no waste,—
The broken vase but frees the balm.

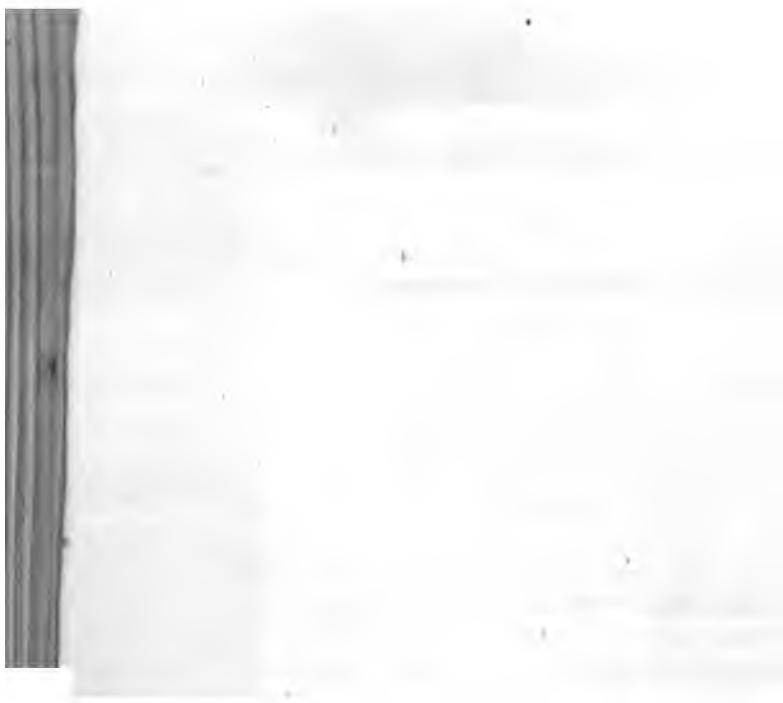
Love is the truest providence,
Since beyond time her gold is good ;
Stamped for man's mean "*three hundred pence*,"
With Christ's "*She hath done what she could.*"

Love is the best economist
In what she sows and what she reaps ;
She lavishes her all on Christ,
And in His all her being steeps.

THE END.







P U B L I C A T I O N S

OF THE

Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

*Most of these Works may be had in Ornamental Bindings,
with Gilt Edges, at a small extra charge.*

	Price. s. d.
ANNALS OF HARTFELL CHASE. By Miss A. C. CHAMBERS, author of "Away on the Moorland," &c. With Three full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.... <i>Cloth boards</i>	1 6
BRAG AND HOLDFAST. By EADGYTH, author of "The Snow Fort," &c. With Three full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.....	<i>Cloth boards</i> 1 6
CRINGLEWOOD COURT. By F. SCARLETT POTTER, author of "Out-of-Doors Friends," &c. With Three full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.....	<i>Cloth boards</i> 2 6
DRIFTED AWAY: a Tale of Adventure. With Three full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.....	<i>Cloth boards</i> 2 6
ERLING; OR, THE DAYS OF ST. OLAF. By F. SCARLETT POTTER, author of "Heroes of the North," "Out-of-Doors Friends," &c. With Three full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.	<i>Cloth boards</i> 2 6
FAN'S SILKEN STRING. By ANNETTE LYSTER, author of "North Wind and Sunshine," &c. With Three full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.	<i>Cloth boards</i> 1 6
FOR FAITH AND FATHERLAND. By M. BRAMSTON, author of "Rosamond Ferrars," &c. With Three full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.....	<i>Cloth boards</i> 2 6
FRONTIER FORT (THE); OR, STIRRING TIMES IN THE NORTH-WEST TERRITORY OF BRITISH AMERICA. By W. H. G. KINGSTON, author of "Ned Garth," &c. With Three full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.....	<i>Cloth boards</i> 1 6
3-10-79.]	[Crown 8vo.

		Price. 2 4
GIRLS OF BREDON (THE); AND MANOR HOUSE STORIES. By Mrs. STANLEY LEATHERS. With Three full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.	<i>Cloth boards</i>	2 0
GREAT CAPTAIN (THE): an Eventful Chapter in Spanish History. By ULLICK R. BURKE, M.A. With Two full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.	<i>Cloth boards</i>	2 0
GUINEA GOLD; OR, THE GREAT BARRIER REEF. By C. H. EDEN, author of "Philip Vandeleur's Victory," &c. With Three full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.	<i>Cloth bds.</i>	1 6
HARRY PRESTON; OR, "TO HIM THAT OVERCOMETH." A Story for Boys. By the author of "Ellen Mansel." With Three full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.	<i>Cloth boards</i>	1 6
HARVEY COMPTON'S HOLIDAY. By the author of "Percy Trevor's Training," "Two Voyages," &c. With Three full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.	<i>Cloth boards</i>	1 6
HEROES OF THE NORTH; OR, STORIES FROM NORWEGIAN CHRONICLE. By F. SCARLETT POTTER, author of "Erling" "Cringewood Court," &c. With Three full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.	<i>Cloth boards</i>	1 6
HIDDEN WORKINGS. By Miss H. R. RUSSELL, author of "Muriel," &c. With Three full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.	<i>Cloth boards</i>	2 0
HOME OF THE WOLVERINE AND BEAVER (THE); OR, FUR-HUNTING IN THE WILDS OF CANADA. By C. H. EDEN, author of "Australia's Heroes," &c. With Three full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.	<i>Cloth boards</i>	2 6
KING'S WARRANT (THE). A Tale of Old and New France. By A. H. ENGELBACH, author of "Lionel's Revenge," &c. With Three full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.	<i>Cl. bds.</i>	2 6
KITTY BLIGH'S BIRTHDAY. By ALFRED H. ENGELBACH, author of "Lionel's Revenge," &c. With Three full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.	<i>Cloth boards</i>	1 6
LEFT IN CHARGE. Being the History of My Great Responsibility. By AUSTIN CLARE, author of "The Carved Cartoon," &c. With Three full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.	<i>Cloth boards</i>	1 6

PUBLICATIONS OF THE SOCIETY.

		Price. s. d.
LITTLE BROWN GIRL (THE). A Story for Children. By ESMÉ STUART. With Three full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.	<i>Cloth boards</i>	3 2 6
MATE OF THE "LILY" (THE); OR, NOTES FROM HARRY MUSGRAVE'S LOG-BOOK. By WILLIAM H. G. KINGSTON, author of "Owen Hartley," &c. With Three full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.	<i>Cloth boards</i>	1 6
MIMI: A STORY OF PEASANT LIFE IN NORMANDY. By ESMÉ STUART, author of "The Little Brown Girl," &c. With Three full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.	<i>Cloth bds.</i>	2 6
MRS. DOBBS'S DULL BOY. By ANNETTE LYSTER, author of "Fan's Silken String," "North Wind and Sunshine," &c. With Three full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.	<i>Cloth bds.</i>	2 6
NED GARTH; OR, MADE PRISONER IN AFRICA. A Tale of the Slave Trade. By W. H. G. KINGSTON, author of "Owen Hartley," "Two Shipmates," &c. With Three full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.	<i>Cloth boards</i>	2 6
NORTH WIND AND SUNSHINE. By ANNETTE LYSTER, author of "Mrs. Dobbs's Dull Boy," &c. With Three full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.	<i>Cloth boards</i>	2 6
NOT A SUCCESS. By the author of "Our Valley," "The Children of Seeligsberg," &c. With Three full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.	<i>Cloth boards</i>	1 6
OUR VALLEY. By the author of "The Children of Seeligsberg," &c. With Three full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.	<i>Cloth boards</i>	2 6
OWEN HARTLEY; OR, UPS AND DOWNS. A Tale of the Land and Sea. By WILLIAM H. G. KINGSTON, author of "The Settlers," &c. &c. With Five full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.	<i>Cloth boards</i>	2 6
PERCY TREVOR'S TRAINING. By the author of "Two Voyages," &c. With Three full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.	<i>Cloth boards</i>	2 6
PHILIP VANDELEUR'S VICTORY. By C. H. EDEN, author of "Australia's Heroes," "The Fifth Continent," &c. With Three full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.	<i>Cloth boards</i>	2 6

PIANO IN THE ATTIC (THE). By ANNETTE LYSTER, author of "Fan's Silken String," &c. With Three full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.	<i>Cloth boards</i>	1 6
RECLAIMED. A Tale. By the Rev. A. EUBULE-EVANS. With Three full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.	<i>Cloth boards</i>	2 6
ROSEBUDS. By the author of "Our Valley," &c. With Three full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.	<i>Cloth bds.</i>	2 6
ROYAL BANNER (THE). A Tale of Life Before and After Confirmation. By AUSTIN CLARE, author of "The Carved Cartoon," &c. With Three full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.	<i>Cloth boards</i>	2 6
SNOWBALL SOCIETY (THE) A Story for Children. By M. BRAMSTON, author of "Rosamond Ferrars," &c. With Three full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.	<i>Cloth boards</i>	2 6
SNOW FORT AND THE FROZEN LAKE (THE); OR, CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS AT POND HOUSE. By EADGYTH. With Three full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.	<i>Cloth boards</i>	2 6
STORIES FROM ITALIAN HISTORY. By B. MONTGOMERIE RANKING. With Two full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.	<i>Cloth boards</i>	1 6
TWO VOYAGES, AND WHAT CAME OF THEM. By the author of "Motherless Maggie," &c. With Three full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.	<i>Cloth boards</i>	2 0
WILFORD FAMILY (THE); OR, HERO-WORSHIP IN THE SCHOOLROOM. By EADGYTH. With Three full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.	<i>Cloth boards</i>	1 6

DEPOSITORIES:

NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE, CHARING CROSS, S.W.;
4. ROYAL EXCHANGE, E.C.; AND 48, PICCADILLY, W.



ILLUSTRATIONS IN THE SOCIETY.

	Price 2/-
PIANO IN THE ATTIC (THE). By ANNETTE LISTER, author of "Janet's Silken String," &c. With Three full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.	<i>Cloth boards</i> 2 6
RECALLED: A Tale. By the REV. A. EUBULE-EVANS. With Three full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.	<i>Cloth boards</i> 2 6
ROSENBURGS. By the author of "Our Valley," &c. With Three full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo. <i>Cloth boards</i>	2 6
ROYAL BANNER (THE). A Tale of Life Before and After Confirmation. By ASTRID CLARK, author of "The Carved Casket," &c. With Three full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.	<i>Cloth boards</i> 2 6
SNOWBALL SOCIETY (THE). A Story for Children. By M. BLOMSTROM, author of "Rosamond Favers," &c. With Three full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.	<i>Cloth boards</i> 2 6
SNOW FORT AND THE FROZEN LAKE (THE); OR, CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS AT POND HOUSE. By EADGYTH. With Three full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo. <i>Cloth boards</i>	2 6
STORIES FROM ITALIAN HISTORY. By B. MONTGOMERIE RANKING. With Two full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.	<i>Cloth boards</i> 1 6
TWO VOYAGES, AND WHAT CAME OF THEM. By the author of "Motherless Maggie," &c. With Three full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.	<i>Cloth boards</i> 2 0
WILFORD FAMILY (THE); OR, HERO-WORSHIP IN THE SCHOOLROOM. By EADGYTH. With Three full-page Illustrations on toned paper. Crown 8vo.	<i>Cloth boards</i> 2 6

DEPOSITORIES:

NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE, CHARING CROSS, S.W.;

4. ROYAL EXCHANGE, E.C.; AND 48, PICCADILLY, W.

